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[A LIFE SAVED A LIFE WON.]

LADY JULIETTE'S SECRET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Grand Court," "The Rose of Kemdale," &c., &c.

CHAPTER III.

Sit thee down and have no shame,
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee;
What care I for any name?
What for order or degree?

Thou shalt not be saved by works,
Thou hast been a sinner, too;
Ruin'd trunks on withered forks,
Empty scarecrows, I and you! *Tennyson.*

The tramp awoke, rubbed his eyes, sat up, remembered that he was thirsty and hungry, shook himself as might a great dog, rose to his feet, and went out smiling into a close green lane which led to the dusty white highway. The highway led in its turn to the sea and that coast town where Colonel Philbertson would land on his return from abroad.

The tramp meant to meet him and greet him on his arrival. Much pleasure did he promise himself in the encounter, for the tramp was of a malicious disposition, as we have stated, and in the approaching humiliation of the proud country gentleman, he anticipated amusement quite congenial to the spiteful bitterness of his disposition.

"By George!" he said, to himself, with a light laugh. "I shall astonish some of them presently. I have missed one chance—one splendid chance, with the loss of that box, but I have others within my grasp, and I promise myself I'll lose no more. I have suffered enough, I think! Fifteen years of toil, and chains and slavery. Oh, won't I take it out of the world now!—won't I pay back on some of them what I have suffered! I'll do worse things now than I did in the days when I was young and hot-headed; but I will do 'em slyly." Here the tramp gave a wicked chuckle. "Nobody shall suspect me of any conduct which is unbecomingly 'a gentleman'—ha, ha!"

He looked down at his dusty feet, and then at the ragged sleeves of his shirt (he wore no coat), and he burst into a louder and more odious laugh.

Just at that moment came the sound of carriage wheels in the road ahead of him. He drew on one side, and put himself into an attitude of humility.

"I may as well beg a shilling as not," said he, to himself, "and I have the chance now."

Then the carriage came in sight—a dashing equipage drawn by two prancing chestnuts. In the carriage sat two young ladies in white hats and feathers, bright-faced girls, who seemed to be chatting joyously. A dog, with long, silky white hair, lay curled up sleeping on the satin cushion opposite.

All at once the carriage stopped and lurched out of its position. One of the ladies uttered a faint cry of alarm, but the coachman drew up the reins, while the footman leaped lightly from his place to ascertain the extent of the mischief.

The wheel was broken, and the carriage could not go on again until a mechanic of some sort was forthcoming.

"You must go to Blackwell for a wheelwright," cried one of the young ladies in a tone of impatience. "We are twelve miles from Allonby now, I am certain."

"And I'm not sure that we will find the man at home, Miss Florence," said the coachman; "but down at Brinkworth, the village to the right, I believe there is a man who understands wheels and—"

"Go, both of you, then," cried the impetuous young lady; "one to Blackwell and the other to Brinkworth. The horses will be all right; lead them to the side of the road, and let them browse among those nut trees."

"Oh, I shall be so frightened; they might run away," cried the other young lady.

"Run away? What nonsense! Poor things, they have been on the road ever since ten o'clock this morning. Look how jaded they are, for all their prancing action just now. But if that's all, let the servants unharness them, and ride one to Blackwell, the other to Brinkworth. They will be back in less than half-an-hour that way; and two can get on one horse, and—"

The other young lady broke into a peal of laughter.

"Then suppose each brings back a blacksmith; what shall we do with the one over and above the requirements of the case?"

"Give him half-a-crown, of course," said Florence, pettishly.

So it actually came to pass that the horses were unharnessed, the servants despatched in different directions, and the impatient young ladies were left sitting in the satin-cushioned carriage, waiting the return of the men.

The tramp had watched everything from his place under the hedge. Nobody had noticed him in the general confusion and excitement of the break-down. When the clatter of the horses' feet had well died away, however, he came forward and approached the young ladies.

Florence started a little at the apparition of this ugly figure, with a red handkerchief bound about his brows.

The other young lady trembled, but preserved an outward calm.

The tramp began in a whining tone.

"I ain't eat nothing since eight o'clock this morning," said he, and herein he spoke truth.

"Lady Juliette, have you any change?" asked Florence, carelessly.

Lady Juliette drew forth a purse of crimson silk, wherein glittered some pieces of gold and silver. She handed a two-shilling-piece to her friend in silence, and Florence put it into the tramp's hand.

There it lay, and the man did not close his palm or move an inch.

The ladies were alarmed.

The fellow saw it, and he amused himself by prolonging their terror. At last Florence spoke.

"We have nothing more for you, good man," said she.

"I ain't a good man, at all," replied the tramp. "I'm only just home, after a fifteen-year spell at Portland. I've had chains on my wrists and ankles, and I've had ever such a taste of the cat for breaking a warder's skull."

"You are an agreeable person, certainly, to meet on a summer night, away from help and friends," retorted the spirited Florence. "but I



am not in the least afraid. Our servants will be back presently."

The tramp chuckled.
"I will have five pounds ten before I stir," he said, doggedly. "Five pounds ten before I stir—before I stir."

"I don't think you will," said Florence, "since we have not so much in the carriage."
"That's a cram," said the tramp, "which being interpreted means a fib, miss."

"Perfectly true," said Florence, whose spirit seemed to rise equal to the occasion: "we were sent on in this carriage by our friends this morning, from the coast. We landed from France last night, and we have not even our jewels or clothes with us; only bare necessities, and very little money; so I think you will have no difficulty in admitting that you are come to a bad market, with your insolence and your threats. Really they can avail you nothing."

The tramp grinned.

"You are a plucky one," he said, "and a pretty one, too. I can see your flashing black eyes, although it's a getting dark; and I can see your yellow-coloured looks a-raining down on your white jacket; and I can see your fine figure—a reglar stunner—by Jove! Well, my pretty dear, I'll make a bargain with you. Either you give me up that there red silk purse and all the gold and silver pieces it's got in its inside, or else you'll just let me come in the carriage, and take my seat nice and comfortable between the two of you, with an arm round each of your waists, so as I can give either one of you a pretty kiss if I feel disposed on either of your nice, round, rosy cheeks. Come, I ain't pertickler, nor I ain't greedy. I don't want to court you and take your money—that wouldn't be fair; but I'm game for one or t'other. A kiss on such a nice, rosy, aristocratic cheek as yours is worth a sovereign, any day."

Lady Juliette Cadotte uttered a low cry of fear. Florence rose indignantly to her feet.

"If you attempt any insolence I can defend myself," she said; "myself and my friend also; if you attempt to enter this carriage I shall strike you with this!"

And the brave girl lifted a large cut-glass scent-bottle, with a solid gold top.

"My dear, I applaud your pluck more nor I can say," returned the tramp, "but I ain't a bit afraid of the smelling bottle all the same, so if you'll please to hand me over that there purse I'll thank you, for I'm afraid you ain't in the mood to enter into a little harmless flirtation; but never mind, we might meet again some of these fine days, and then perhaps you'll be in a better humour, honey; I never troubles myself about the ladies' little tempers, I knows it natur; they're weak and nervous, and given to screeching and scratching, my pretty, which fact it may be as you knows of without my tellin' of you."

Florence still stood erect, brandishing her costly weapon of defence.

"Here, here, give him the purse for Heaven's sake," whispered Lady Juliette, "he will go then."

"Not while I retain possession of my senses, Lady Juliette. The women who can boast, and ride, and walk as we can do, ought not to be cowed by a wretched tramp of this kind. I'm not the least afraid of him."

This was spoken in a rapid whisper, but the tramp heard it all.

"My dear," he said, "don't give way to them there naughty tempers; submit to the decrees of fate, and do it with the best grace you can. Perhaps you'd let me have a kiss, but I ain't in a mood for a kiss now; the purse, if you please, the purse; quick, or I must sacrifice sentiment to business, and I'd be sorry to spoil your beauty."

"Here, here, take the purse," cried Lady Juliette, starting up in wild terror; "there's only five pounds in it. See, I've thrown it in the road. Look! down there. Do, do, do go away, please!"

"Juliette, what an insufferable coward you are," said Florence Random, speaking French to her friend in a tone of the bitterest contempt.

"Ah, my dear, you are the plucky one and no mistake," said the tramp, when he had picked up the purse. "You're more to my taste than the little beauty in the corner. Well, ladies, I wishes you handsome husbands, with lots of tin and big sounding titles, and I hopes, as I remarked before, as we shall have the pleasure of meeting again. I don't know when I was so struck all of a heap by a lady before, my dear, and I'm forty-eight years old and has seen a lot of the sex in my time. Good evening, ladies."

Then he started off at wonderful speed, leaving the two girls frightened, excited, and amazed.

"What insolence!" cried Miss Random. "Oh, the wretch! I hope, as he says, we shall meet him again, and I hope he will be in the dock being tried for his life."

"Florence, what a horribly unfeminine wish," said Lady Juliette, in a soft, sweet tone of voice.

"Remember, if the poor wretch is tried for his life he must kill someone first."

"Oh, he's done that long enough ago," cried Miss Florence, "depend upon it. The miscreant," she added, fiercely. "I took as much note of him as I could, hoping to be able to identify him again, but that handkerchief hid his eyes and forehead, and the thick moustache hid his mouth. Still I fancy I should know his voice again. I sha'n't rest till I have him in gaol—the wretch."

"How vengeful you are," said Lady Juliette.
"I hate these sickly, sentimental, milk and water days; there's no scope in this country for a woman of energy. I think I'll go and live in Greece, or Italy, or Spain. There is always some thunder and lightning in the political atmosphere in those countries. I'm tired to death of croquet parties, balls, operas, and hollow flirtations, which are the only legitimate occupations for a girl of fashion now-a-days."

"Try matrimony," said Lady Juliette, quietly.
"I have refused half-a-dozen men," cried Miss Random, loftily.

"Because you did not love them?" asked Lady Juliette.

"Love them! What a sentimental creature you are, Juliette. I hope I shall never make such a goose of myself as to 'fall in love' as it is called. No, no! None of those people are up to my standard. Some were in the army, and I don't like soldiers of the present day; there's not enough for them to do. Some were younger sons, going into the Church; I detest parsons. Some were too elderly and too ugly to be thought of for an instant. All were too poor. I must have loads and loads of money if I once sacrifice my liberty. No! I'm twenty-seven, and I've given up all thoughts of the marriage tie, legal fetters, bond-slave's chains. Heigho!"

"Fetters, chains, bonds, indeed," murmured Lady Juliette, "when the husband is chosen for you, and you are handed over to him without being permitted to raise your voice in protest."

"More fool you," said the masculine and unceremonious, handsome and outspoken Miss Random.
"Why do you submit?"

"You know I have no other choice between marriage with Sir Guildford Owen or utter beggary."

"Choose utter beggary, then, by all means," cried Florence. "Sir Guildford is the ugliest man in London. False teeth, false wig; sixty-two if he is a day. First wife ran away from him just because he was so ugly years and years ago. He's awfully rich, of course, but what good would that do you; he would be so jealous that he would pistol another man for handing you your fan. Oh, don't think of him."

"I have not seen him since I was eight," said Lady Juliette, "that's ten years ago, and I quite forget what he was like. He came into the nursery and he gave me a blue box with a beautiful painting in ivory on the lid, and the box was filled with delicious bon-bons. I suppose I was a selfish little child, for I retained no recollection of the countenance of my benefactor, although I devoured the bon-bons, and I have the box now."

"How touching," cried Florence, mockingly; "do you drop tears on the ivory painting and count the hours that lie between you and that first lover's kiss he will impress on your fair hand. Oh, he is so stout, Juliette, I hope he won't go down on his knees to you *ma chère*, for I'm sure I don't know how ever he will get up again."

"How cruel you are; no heart, no pity, no sympathy," murmured Juliette.

"My dear, I never pretend; you will never hear a word of flattery from my rosy lips, as some people have called them; you see, if they say to you, beautiful Juliette, marry a gouty old party, or become a beggar, I can't see that any great sympathy is due to you; you have the choice—Lady Owen, and dinner, and diamonds; Lady Juliette, and no diamonds, and you must earn your dinners, I suppose, as genteel companion, governess, or something. Some handsome man, who can give you dinners and diamonds, or perhaps only dinners, is sure to fall in love with you, and then you go up to the altar at last, 'all in white, and the bridesmaids all in a row in pink, and blue, and green, the smartest that ever were seen.' Hark, don't you hear the horses coming back both together? hurrah! now then, don't talk, let me tell them all about the tramp; how I hope he will be caught, and hanged!"

CHAPTER IV.

Ready of wit, and flashing of eye,
Beautiful, dangerous, laughing, and sly,
With her long riding-skirt and her long brown hair;
Heartless and merry, and graceful and fair,
Be on your guard, sir, beware, beware.

EUGENE FERNANDEZ sat in his schoolroom at his desk, and his sixty young scholars were arranged on benches placed one behind the other, extending from within a quarter of a yard of the desk to within a quarter of a yard of the door—

six benches, and ten scholars on each bench. The room was not large in proportion to the number of the scholars; the walls were coloured, and against them hung large maps and scripture texts, and slates with bars of music and mathematical problems chalked upon them.

It was a hot morning—so hot that the boys breathed loud and unbuttoned their shirt collars, and rubbed away at their red, steaming faces (those of them who had handkerchiefs). The windows were open, the door was open; outside was a piece of common land, where a few turkeys were gobbling, and a stray donkey was trying to breakfast from the short, sun-browned turf. Glistening in the distance was a large cool pond, where grew green rushes, and where a jovial society of ducks were enjoying themselves after the manner of their kind. Beyond the pond lay the village of Allonby, embowered in trees. The church spire rose amid them, spiral, solemn, beautiful; there were the red tiles of farmhouses, and the gleaming of corn-stacks and hay-ricks, yellow as gold in the hot sun.

The handsome schoolmaster, in light coat and snowy white cuffs, his crisp raven hair clustering on his head in short rippling waves, his fine, dark face, turned towards his little scholars, seemed as much oppressed by the weather as he was by everything else in his common-place existence. He was teaching the boys geography that hot morning, and while he discoursed of bays, and capes, and promontories, and the elder boys drew illustrations on their slates, the heat grew more and more intense. The schoolroom with its sixty-one occupants became of an atmosphere unbearable.

"I wish all of those boys loved cold baths and yellow soap," murmured the schoolmaster. "How their shoes, and coats, and smocks oppress the air. What a pity one can't have a punkah. Ah—"

He started slightly, for there came the rumbling of distant thunder, and immediately after the bright sunshine was shadowed, and great mountains of dark cloud rose up in the west. Fernandez looked out with a feeling of relief; then continued to discourse of capes, and promontories, and bays, and the boys wrote on their slates.

But now and anon the urchins raised furtive glances towards the darkening sky. Another crash—nearer this time, and louder, and then a dancing, brilliant light, flashing suddenly at the windows. Some of the boys rose to their feet in the pleasant expectation of a grand spectacle, but three or four of the younger children set up a dismal cry. These were small creatures, just promoted to the dignity of boy's clothing.

The young Spanish schoolmaster was always tender and kind towards the weak and the small. His white teeth gleamed in a reassuring smile, and his dark face glowed with an expression of benevolence that made it beautiful, as he ordered the small cowards to be brought near his desk, where he comforted them with stories of things he had seen in foreign lands.

The mere lessons were suspended while the storm raged. It was a fearful tempest, one of the most violent of which this wet, windy, somewhat dreary climate is capable. The peals of thunder seemed as if it would have rent the sky and rooted up the foundations of the ground; tremendous peals echoing like artillery in a fearful battle, and then a noise, indescribable, awe-inspiring! One of Heaven's great bolts had fallen, and in spite of the soothing voice of Fernandez, the little folks in pinafores set up another cry. The rainfall splashing, dashing, crashing against the windows, tearing up the soft gravel outside. All at once the sound of horse's hoofs, nearing and nearing in a gallop that sounded like running away at wild, headlong speed—and then a woman's cry!

Fernandez rushed down the room, and out to the door. A horse was running away, and a lady, whose hat was gone, whose long dark hair hung low on her shoulders, who clung tight and main to her horse's neck like one who has lost all presence of mind, while the animal, mad with fear, made straight to the deep pond, cried out piteously "Help, help!"

To rush through the flashing, roaring storm at the top of his speed to the horse's head, to seize his bridle with an almost supernatural strength, to cry out to the lady, "Courage, courage!" was only the work of two moments with Fernandez. He patted the neck of the frightened horse, soothed him with a word, and led him to the door of the schoolroom. There he lifted the lady from the saddle almost without asking her leave, and begged her to enter and seat herself. The horse, trembling, and snorting, and inclined to kick, he led to a small outhouse, where he turned him in, and shut the door firmly as he came out. Then he returned to the schoolroom. The rain was still plashing against the roof. All the boys were huddled together, and staring at the young lady, who sat on a rush-bottomed chair, trembling, and with downcast eyes.

She raised those eyes as Fernandez entered, and the light and pathos and beauty of them entered into

his heart and set it beating, while his blood raced up and down in his veins, tingling at his very finger ends. What a delightful break in the monotony of his dreary village life. Who was this creature, beautiful as a houri—and the artistic Fernandez was fastidious in his ideas of beauty—graceful as an antelope, dignified as an empress, proud as a princess of the blood? He had a fine instinct, which told him this girl belonged to the English aristocracy. There was high birth in the fine white hands, small ears, arched nostril, slender throat. Probably she was seventeen years old. Her hair was dark brown, her eyes blue as the June sky, and large, bright, soft, filled with an intensity of expression impossible to define; there was a resolute look in them, and yet surely a mine of inexhaustible tenderness: "how she could love," mused the young man. The features were of the purest Greek type, the complexion of a waxen fairness, only the faintest blush rose tint on the delicate cheek. Fernandez approached the beautiful unknown and bowed low.

"I regret, mademoiselle," he said, "that I have no better shelter to offer you. If you will permit me, I will go presently to your home and direct that a carriage be sent for you. You cannot mount the horse again to day."

She started at the sound of his voice, and their eyes meeting, a lovely flush mantled in her cheek for an instant, and the bewildering brightness of her smile electrified the schoolmaster.

"I owe my life to you," she said, "and I am not ungrateful, believe me. I hope I may be able some day to testify my gratitude."

"It is quite enough pleasure, the bliss of having done you a service," cried Fernandez, carried away by the impetuous excitement of the moment.

"Could it be possible? Was the white brow knit into an expression of surprise and displeasure? She bowed her graceful head, and said gravely:

"Believe me, I am most grateful. Courage and presence of mind are—"

She hesitated for a word, afraid, it seemed, of using one too flattering.

"Only other words for common sense," said impulsive Fernandez, a little bitterly.

She looked at him with a pained expression in the blue eyes. She saw he was hurt, and hastened to reassure him.

"Much more than that," she said, "noble qualities. Ha! don't you hear other horses' hoofs? That must be the groom or, perhaps, my friend. My horse broke away from my party. I—"

She listened again. It was the regular pattering of horses' feet, it was the rolling of wheels upon gravel that she heard.

The storm had ceased within the last two minutes, not a drop of rain fell, the carriage stopped before the door, a footman descended and let down the step, the next moment a stout florid clerical personage entered the room. This gentleman wore spectacles, his voice was pompous when he cried out:

"Really, Mr. Fernandez, this isn't discipline, you should not allow the storm to interfere with—"

Then suddenly catching sight of the beautiful girl, his whole expression changed. He bowed low, he went up to her and took her hands, he entered into a whispered conversation. A pale, spiritual looking young clergyman had followed the red-faced one into the room. Fernandez went up to him and whispered "Mr. Glenham, what is that lady's name?"

CHAPTER V.

Cursed be the social wants
That err against the strength of youth,
Cursed be the social lies
Which warp us from the living truth.

Tennyson.

"It is the Lady Juliette Cadette, ward of Colonel Philbertson, of Maberly Abbey," replied the young curate, in a low tone.

Fernandez fell back a pace or two, he grew a shade paler, some of the fiery brilliancy faded out of his large black eyes. He was abashed for a moment or so, staggered and confounded at the mention of those high-sounding English names and titles. Great Heavens! what an immeasurable gulf lay between him and the peerless beauty who sat under the high-pointed schoolroom window, talking to the rector. A feeling of tumultuous indignation, a rebellious protest against the conventionalities, the pride of caste, the distinctions of rank, all the rules and regulations which the polite world imposes, rose up high and burning in this passionate soul like a fierce flame fanned by a stormy wind. He was calm outwardly, he even smiled while he talked quietly of the rain, the thunder, and the lightning.

The good curate, too high-souled to suspect others, never believing in evil until it was palpably before his eye, the pure-souled Arthur Glenham, who admired all that was noble and generous, and large-hearted in the impetuous Fernandez, saw nothing dangerous in the gleaming brightness of those dark

eyes, heard no mutterings which gave warning of the volcanic nature of this fiery spirit in the deep sweet tones of the young man's voice.

We have no wish to enlist the sympathies of our readers too strongly at first in favour of Eugene Fernandez, the poor toiling schoolmaster of the village. We tell the truth frankly, that his is a very peculiar character, far from faultless. But we can promise this much on his behalf: through all the pages of the strange and stirring story which is about to follow, we shall never have to record of him one mean or base action, he will never utter one falsehood, he will never commit one cruelty, he will never oppress those weaker or poorer than himself. But there was smothered fire, dangerous passion, Lucifer-like, unholy pride, in this generous young soul.

The curate thought not of it. His was that perfect Christian charity, which "thinks no evil, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things."

"Miss Florence Random and myself landed at Horton Bay two days since, Mr. Upperton," said beautiful Lady Juliette, to the rector. "Colonel and Mrs. Philbertson found a letter awaiting them at their hotel which called them at once to London. Thereupon they hired a carriage and post-horses, and sent us on at once under the charge of the old footman and coachman to Maberly, for the colonel has a dislike to our travelling by rail unless under the care of himself and Mrs. Philbertson. We had a pleasant journey until we were within ten miles of here, and then the wheel broke, the servants rode off (each on one of the horses) to look for a blacksmith; and then a robber attacked us, and threatened us. I was terribly frightened; I am afraid I am a sad coward; but Miss Random was quite Amazonian in her courage."

Here the musical laugh of Lady Juliette rang through the bare school-room, like the echo of a silver bell; and all the little boys looked up and wondered at the dulcet sound, at once sweet and piercing.

Fernandez unconsciously drew nearer to the rector, and the young beauty. She raised her eyes to his, and a frank smile was upon the red, ripe, lovely lips, as she went on merrily with her story, her tiny gold headed riding whip was in her hand, and she slashed it against the top of her tiny boot, which peeped from under the long riding skirt. The action was unconventional; nay, there are prim governesses perchance in the world who would even deem the beautiful Juliette unladylike in thus slashing her boot like a young huntman, or a young officer of dragoons. There was no prim governess, however, in that humble school-room; only a pompous rector, a mild curate, a number of wondering school children, and a young man with burning dark eyes, and a pale statuesque face set into an expression of patient and lowly docility.

Then Lady Juliette went on to relate the episode with which the reader is already acquainted; the tale of the tramp and the robbery, and Miss Random's brave war of words with that insolent character.

The curate looked at Fernandez.

"Tuesday night?" said he in an inquiring tone; "that was the night, Mr. Fernandez, after the one when I stood at your gate, and a man asked charity, and wished to be directed to Maberly Abbey?"

"And the next morning," cried Lady Juliette, "a man, answering in every description to the tramp, presented himself at the servants' door, and asked when the colonel would be home."

"Infamous scoundrel!" cried the pompous, spectacled vicar. "The police must be put on his track; I hope he will undergo fourteen years of penal servitude."

Lady Juliette gave a little start.

"Why, Mr. Upperton, you are as fond of the terrors of the law as Miss Random, almost. As for me I have lost my two pounds ten (we have shared the loss between us, Florence and I), and I don't think my fright and my loss are worth fourteen years of the man's suffering."

"Dearest Lady Juliette," cried the pompous vicar, assuming the paternal character, "do not give utterance to what I cannot but call radical and republican sentiments; at least, not here in the presence of inferiors." He glanced as he spoke at the handsome schoolmaster, whose eyes were now fixed upon the bare school-room boards, as if he read a solemn history there. "Of your inferiors," added the vicar, more loudly. "Those sentiments would sound prettily in the blue drawing-room at Maberly, but here they are not suitable."

Then the large, steadfast blue eyes were raised to the vicar's, and over the marble fairness of the exquisite face there passed a bluish vivid and lovely as the rosy morning clouds which flit over the eastern heavens.

"That is to say, Mr. Upperton," said the young beauty, and Fernandez fancied that she was speaking with a sort of concentrated passion between her white teeth, "that is to say that women should

have no thoughts of their own; they are drawing-room dolls, whose pretty utterances men may laugh at or applaud as seems best to their superior judgment."

Her lip curled haughtily, almost bitterly, Fernandez watching the lovely face, hardly knew which to worship the most, its physical beauty, its perfect moulding of lip and nostril and brow and chin, or its wonderful power, its intellectual fervour, its eager, earnest expression of concentrated thought.

"If what I say be true, then let me speak truth anywhere and to anybody." She made a little impatient gesture with her right hand. "But if what I say be false, I may satisfy myself with making pretty speeches to the blue satin chairs in the drawing-room at Maberly."

She rose as she spoke, and then the smile came back to the beautiful mouth, and she walked a few paces, looking towards the sky where it seemed to rise against the high pointed windows of the schoolroom.

"See," she cried out, "the clouds are positively rolling away. There is a patch of blue;" she pointed with her whip handle. "I wonder how Florence and the man-servant are getting on! They were making straight for the shelter of the Hestfield Farm when my horse broke away and dashed across the common. I have no doubt they think I am killed."

Again the lip curled, half bitterly, half sadly. The schoolmaster, watching every fleeting expression of the lady's face, said to himself:

"She feels as I feel. This kindred soul was struck from the same spark which kindled mine into existence; but, alas, and alas! she is a Lady Juliette, while I—while I—"

He had no time to finish his cogitation, to dream to the final scene in his romantic reverie. The vicar was upon his steps, while, positively lost in the infatuation of the moment, he was following in those of the Lady Juliette, while she walked down the room, lifting one end of the long riding-skirt gracefully in one hand while she toyed with the tiny whip in the other. The young girl's face was bent thoughtfully towards the floor; the long brown hair hung low on her shoulders. She was more beautiful at that moment than anything of which Fernandez had ever dreamed in his poetic reveries and imaginative fancies.

"Sir," said the vicar roughly, "what are you thinking of, pray? Go and attend to the school boys," and he added in a lower key in the ear of the young schoolmaster, "you forget yourself strangely my good fellow."

Fernandez had so lost himself in the rapt contemplation of the Lady Juliette, that he was obliged to own he had deserved a rebuke, though not one so cruelly and coarsely given. He turned aside, and called up his boys and marshalled them into order, and then the vicar cried out "That the sun was shining, and that Lady Juliette must accept a place in his carriage, and he would drive with her to Maberly Abbey." She walked lightly up to the pale schoolmaster, who sat now at his desk mending a pen. He raised his splendid eyes to meet hers, and a flash shot from them which thrilled the earl's daughter like an electric shock, though we speak of her spiritual, not her physical being. She was startled at that glance of fire, but to the amazement of the curate, to the horror of the vicar, to the deep, intense, inexpressible delight of the schoolmaster, she put her hand into his hand.

"Thank you, Mr. Fernandez," she said. "You have, by your courage and presence of mind, saved my life. Juliette Cadette thanks you, heartily, and if ever it lies in her power to benefit you, rely upon it she will not fail."

She said no more, only walked away and entered the carriage, where she was followed by the two clergymen. She sank among the drab satin cushions, leaned back, clasped her hands, and looked at the vicar with a curious smile.

"I am becoming quite the heroine of a series of adventures, Mr. Upperton," she said. "Goodness only knows where it is all to end." She laughed merrily. "First of all I am robbed in a carriage on a public highway, then I am run away with by my poor frightened horse, who is just on the point of drowning me and himself in the deep fish pond below, when we are saved by yonder handsome, Spanish-looking youth. Who is he, Mr. Upperton?"

She asked the question in her quick, impulsive bright way.

"He is the village schoolmaster, Lady Juliette," replied the vicar, drily.

"Oh, sir, I know that," replied the young lady, "but he is surely not a common-place young man, is he?"

"I do not understand quite what your ladyship means by a common-place young man," returned the vicar, more drily than before.

"Don't you?" asked her pretty ladyship, a little saucily. "Well how shall I define one? I will do so by negatives; I will say what this schoolmaster is not, and then you may discover what I consider

common-place. He is not plain in face, and pudgy in form, excuse the word; he has not meek subservient eyes, he has not the air of one who has looked only on these English fields, and farms, and folks. He speaks as though he had original thought in his brain, not simply the borrowed opinions of other men. He is not conventional, and yet he is chivalrous; he is brave, and yet he is gentle with the children and with animals. How tender he was towards my poor frightened horse!"

"Your ladyship has passed away from the rule of negative definition with which you set out," said Mr. Clenham, with one of his kindly smiles.

"Have I?" she laughed merrily. "Well, I suppose I have, but remember he saved my life; I am really interested in this person, who has saved my life."

Then the vicar took up the thread of the discourse, and related to the listening beauty the story of the young schoolmaster; his foreign training; his English mother; the deaths of his friends; his illness and destitution, and finally, the Rev. Joseph Upperton's charity towards him. Nor did the vicar forget to place himself in a pleasing light in the eyes of the Lady Juliette. "Had it not been for me," said the rev. gentleman, winding up his story, "that young man would have been now a bare-footed beggar in the streets of Constantinople; but I have tested the hollowness of human gratitude; that young man is the most untruthful person it has ever been my lot to meet with."

"Impossible!" cried the Lady Juliette.

The vicar shook his head sorrowfully.

"He is rebellious; he even on occasion neglects his duties. He has no idea of his proper position in life; he is presumptuous; he is, I fear, even of a dangerous temper. I have seen a fearful gleam in his eyes at times. No, I hope your ladyship is not about to enlist this young man among your tribe of village favourites? He is not worthy of the distinction, I assure you."

Lady Juliette bowed her head and smiled.

"I must, I suppose, conform to your superior judgment, Mr. Upperton," she said.

But the curate saw a certain flash in the large blue eyes which the rector did not see.

The storm had rolled away, the sky looked of a deeper and purer azure than before the tempest; the sun shone on the heavy foliage of Maberly Park, glistening with the bright raindrops, everything seemed refreshed, greener, more beautiful. The carriage was some time in passing along the great avenue.

Lady Juliette had relapsed into a more silent mood than was her wont. She smiled, and honoured the pompous vicar with just so much attention as the rules of politeness dictated, and no more. She was evidently thinking of other things than those of which he so elegantly discoursed.

At last the carriage drew up in front of the grand modern mansion, with its flowered terraces, its fountains and marble basin, where the swans were sailing, its rich portico—all its lordly repose and calm of splendid affluence.

The Lady Juliette sprang lightly down the steps, then turning towards the two clergymen, she prayed them to enter the house and partake of lunch. The vicar was not proof against the pleasant prospect. He was a pompous and a haughty minister of religion. He loved, in the language of Holy Writ "the first places in the synagogues, and the upper rooms at feasts." Suiting the same spirit to these modern times, the vicar loved to visit at the houses of the nobility. His family were the most fashionably dressed in the neighbourhood, his carriage, horses, and servants were all of the smartest and most dashing, his house was furnished in expensive taste—in short, the vicar lived quite up to the eight hundred per annum, which was the income arising from the living at Allonby. He had married a wife with five hundred a year, and this money was allowed to accumulate from year to year. The vicar was at once a prudent and a pompous man, wise as are the "children of this world," rather than pious, patient, and loving as are "the children of light." Among these last we shall do well to count the good curate, Arthur Clenham.

The vicar, then, was delighted at the prospect of lunching familiarly at Maberly in company with the Lady Juliette Cadette. He at once accepted the invitation; but the curate as steadily refused.

"I was on my way to Syme's cottage, sir," he said to the vicar "when you stopped the carriage, and told me you were going my way, and had so many things to discuss with me, and also to call at the school. I have lost time as it is, Lady Juliette," he added, turning to the young lady, "and I feel quite sure you will pardon my refusing your kind invitation."

Now the vicar was not at all pleased at the curate's little speech. It seemed to make out that he, the curate, preferred duty before pleasure; also, it was not, in his opinion, so humble a speech as a poor young curate should have made to a titled dame like this beautiful young Lady Juliette.

"He positively seems inclined to put himself upon a par with her," thought the vicar. "This won't do at all. Mr. Clenham," said he, addressing Lady Juliette in his most pompous tones, "is quite right; he has no time for mere visiting, especially in the early part of the day. I wish all young people to place duty before pleasure; it is a maxim which I endeavour to impress upon all those under me—and now, Lady Juliette."

He bowed and offered his fat hand to Lady Juliette to assist her in mounting the marble steps, she thanked him, laughed, but mounted the steps herself, springing up two or three at a time. The carriage was left waiting. The curate raised his hat, and hurried off on foot across the park. Then the pompous vicar went under the carved portico, and so on to the great entrance hall of Maberly. It was a magnificent apartment, paved with many coloured marbles in mosaic work that looked like jewels, for it was bordered with arabesques in gold on rich black marble. The chairs and curtains were of rich jet black satin, heavily flowered with gold; gold bullion fringe hung from the curtains; the pillars were of pure white marble exquisitely carved; the windows were gorgeously painted after the models of those glowing windows in the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, in Paris, a high mantle-piece, which looked more like a saint's altar in a Catholic Church, (so richly was it chiselled, and so exquisite were the devices, all chosen from scriptural subjects), went up nearly to the ceiling of the hall. This ceiling was painted in medallions framed in gold, each painting representing some episode in the lives of the saints, the first martyrs of the Christian Church.

The vicar had not very often visited at Maberly, for the colonel—cousin to half a dozen earls in his youth, and now cousin in the second degree to all their immediate descendants; the colonel, who had been recalled from India a dozen years before by the death of his elder brother—the childless owner of Maberly Abbey—the colonel, who had fought abroad and been noted in his regiment as the strictest disciplinarian that had ever entered the service during the present century—the colonel, we repeat, patronised the vicar—invited him to dine now and then, chatted with him if he met him in the village, but never admitted him upon those close terms of intimacy which would have been dear to the pompous soul of Mr. Upperton; for (low be it spoken) it was hinted that the vicar was the son of a London baker, who had expended all his earnings in procuring for his only child a university education, and all his small political influence in helping to return a certain member to Parliament, who had, in gratitude, procured for the Reverend Joseph the fat and flourishing living of Allonby.

Whether all these tales be true or not we can hardly say, but certain it is that the colonel believed them, and the colonel was the very haughtiest of men—the very incarnation of English pride. The rich and pompous vicar he never treated as an equal, and hence the delight of the said pompous gentleman at being invited to lunch with the radiant Lady Juliette Cadette.

Lady Juliette was the orphan daughter of one of the noblest English families. High as was that of the colonel, her guardian, the Lady Juliette's was infinitely higher. With much frustration, then—with fuss and delight, and many compliments, did Mr. Upperton pause to admire the paintings, and carvings, and marbles in that splendid hall. Afterwards he followed Lady Juliette into a vast dining-room, furnished with singular taste in light maple wood and deep blue satin, embossed with silver.

Lady Juliette did not retire to her room to make any alteration in her dress. Still in her riding habit, and with her splendid hair raining down on her shoulders on one side, she rang the bell and ordered lunch, and then sank back in a chair.

"I am very tired after my long ride, and I have had a great fright; and I feel in want of food and wine," said Lady Juliette. "I wish they would make haste."

Just then came the sound of horses' feet upon the path below the terrace.

"Here comes Florence," cried Lady Juliette, and a few moments afterwards Miss Random rushed into the maple dining-room.

Miss Random was a tall, aristocratic, dashing-looking young woman of seven-and-twenty. She had a fine bust and slender waist, and a quantity of long, glossy, yellow hair. She had large, fine, insolent eyes, or rather eyes that could be insolent on occasion. She was, according to her own confession, a flirt and heartless; she had abandoned the idea of marriage, and now gave herself up to the enjoyment of her liberty and her income of some five hundred a year. She was an orphan, and her family was noble and aristocratic on all sides. Her pride was equal to her daring. What good qualities she had will develop themselves in the course of the following history, and the reader may like or dislike her according to his taste.

"So you are alive, Mademoiselle Juliette?" she cried, flinging her gloves and riding whip upon the sofa. "I did not quite know whether I was to expect to find you wrapped in the cold embrace of—what is it? Help me through—I'm so bad at quotations. I've been holding counsel with myself all along the avenue."

The vicar opened his eyes in amaze. This outspoken lady was a little too much for his nerves.

She bowed haughtily and distantly to him as she passed him to reach the side of her friend. There she dropped on one knee before the chair where her friend reclined, and lifted one of her hands into her own.

"You look pale," she said, "and worn, and as if you had had a shock. Tell me all about it, little one."

Here the vicar took upon himself the task of narrator. He began the history of the storm, and related the episode of the frightened horse, and the intrepid energetic schoolmaster to the best of his ability.

"Good gracious," cried Miss Random, when he had finished the tale, "what a plucky little schoolmaster."

"He is not little," said Lady Juliette quietly, "he is tall."

Florence made a strange grimace.

"I am sure I should hate him without seeing him. I hate him already," said the dashing belle.

"Why?" asked Lady Juliette in her dulcet serious voice.

"Oh, he is one of your radical, people's rights men, I know it by instinct, is he not Mr. Upperton?" turning towards the vicar, "isn't he a radical, I know he is, a common creature who fancies because he is somewhat learned that he is better than, or at least equal with those whose fathers were barons and dukes when his fathers were mean base serfs. I daresay he speaks foreign tongues, and fancies himself a favourite of the gods? He reads Carlyle, I will wager anything, and thinks himself one of those heroes who have not yet found a niche in the 'Temple of Fame.' And here Florence made another grimace. "In society he would be a terrible creature of course, in case some weak philanthropist, or promoter of learning, some encourager of genius in disguise was weak enough to bring him into a room with silk cushions and persons of rank. Have you read 'Alton Locke,' Juliette? It is the history of a learned tailor, my dear, who fell in love with a dean's daughter, and then was thrown into prison for joining with rioters. I expect your schoolroom hero is the son of a tailor if one only knew."

"How strangely you talk," said Juliette, "you must have heard something before of this unfortunate young man. Mr. Upperton has only told you that he saved my life, and that he is the village schoolmaster."

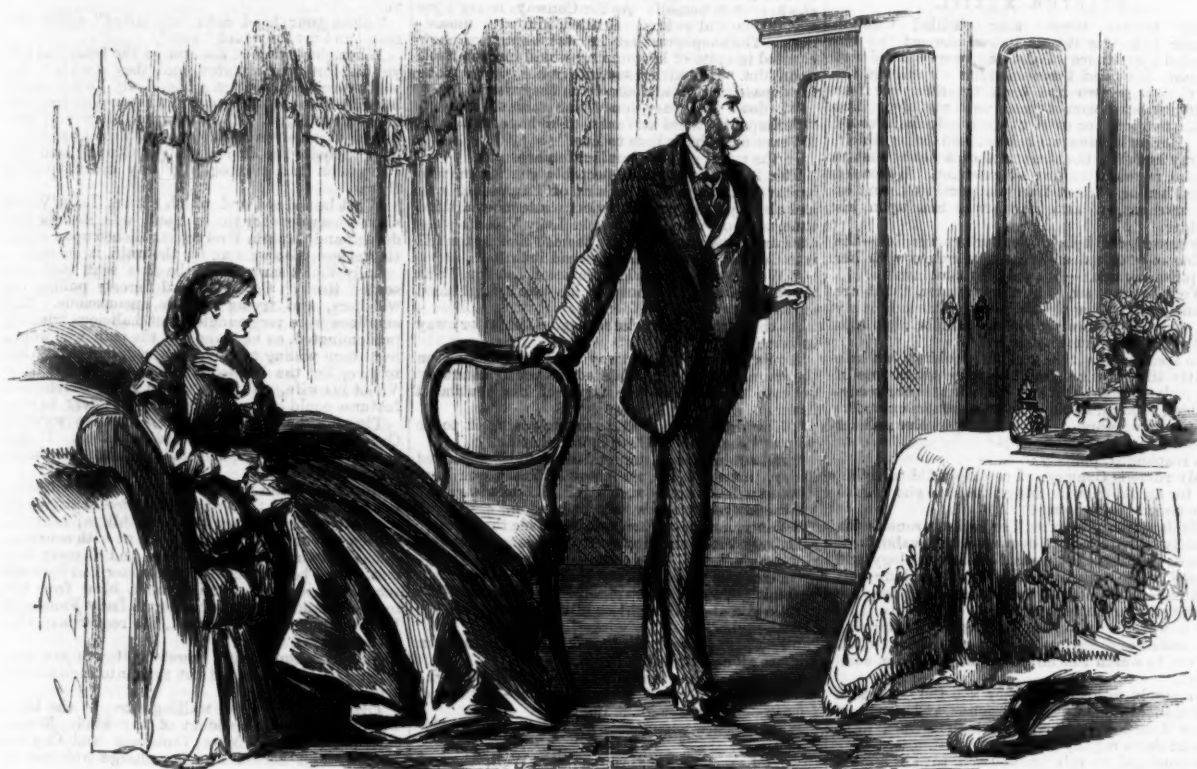
"Yes, I have heard something—I have heard something," said Miss Random, "and what I have heard makes me hate this man excessively."

"Here comes the lunch," cried Lady Juliette.

The servants entered at that moment, with the hot lunch, and the two ladies sat down with the vicar to partake of it.

(To be continued.)

THE CRANIAL CAVITY.—The temperature of the cranial cavity has lately been investigated by Mendel, of Pankow, near Berlin. He states that Fick had already found the normal temperature of the cranial cavity to be lower than that of the body generally. Jacobson and Bernhardt had similarly noticed the inferior temperature of the blood arriving at the heart by the superior vena cava, and the depression produced by it in the right cavities. M. Mendel corroborated these results, and finds constantly that in health there is a difference of from seven-tenths to one degree centigrade between the temperature of the cranial cavity and the rectum in the rabbit, and that in the dog the difference is almost as well marked. Dumeril and Demarquay have shown that the temperature of the body is lowered by the action of chloroform. Bouisson arrived at the same results, as have also Sulzanski and Scheinsson; the latter experimenting upon man. The difference observed by Mendel between the cranial and rectal temperature is much more pronounced when the animal is under the influence of chloroform than when in health. Chloroform lowers the temperature generally, but especially that of the cranial cavity. The effects produced by chloral on the general temperature have been already studied by Demarquay. This author has found that the temperature of the body falls several tenths of a degree. Mendel arrives at the same results in regard to the temperature of the cranial cavity, except that it falls to a still greater degree than the general temperature. Dequix, Dupuy, Leuret, and Gscheiden have found that, after a medicinal dose of morphia the temperature of the body rises, though when given in a poisonous dose it falls. Mendel again arrives at a similar conclusion.



[THE NOISE IN THE WARDROBE.]

MYSTERY OF THE BLACK DIAMOND.

CHAPTER XXXII.

AFTER some moments silence, oppressive to both, Lady Violet said, quietly:

"You must not speak so to me, ever again, Daisy. I cannot answer for myself, if you do."

"I am sorry," Daisy acknowledged slowly, "but you do owe me something."

"When do you propose to acknowledge all to your husband?" asked Lady Violet, returning to the main question.

"I would do so any moment if I didn't think he would—"

"Murder me the next," was her half-sullen, half-accused thought, but she did not utter it.

"When will you?" persisted her sister. "We must decide this question somehow. Don't you see we must? We cannot go on this way indefinitely."

"Oh! Violet, what shall I do?"

"Do you seriously ask me? Tell him the truth at the very next opportunity."

"I dare not. He barely endures me now."

"If that is so the sooner he knows all the better. Let him go, Daisy, and stay with me. We have only each other after all. Let us turn our backs upon the rest of the world. So, you would not like that?—we will travel, then. All that I have shall be as much yours as mine, and if there is a pleasure in the world that money can buy you it shall be yours."

Daisy only shook her head and moaned.

"You don't know how I love him. You don't know what love is, or you would not talk so."

"I don't want to know, if it would chain me such a serf at the heels of a man who despised me," was the indignant response. "But, Daisy, you don't answer me yet. When is all this to end?"

"Perhaps he will feel better when we get to Paris. There is so much to humiliate and irritate him here," suggested Daisy, gloomily.

"Will you tell him in a month?"

"If I dare."

Lady Violet quitted her seat, and walked up and down the room in angry perplexity. Her glance softened again as it fell on her sister's shrinking figure.

"I ought to pity her all the more for being such a coward," she said, and went back to her.

"Listen to me, Daisy. This is my final decision in this matter: Go abroad or stay here as you like," she spoke kindly, yet with firmness. "I give you three months still, if you go away from the Cliffe, and three weeks if you stay. At the end of that time, I absolutely refuse to keep silence longer, or to allow you to conceal yourself from your husband under my name."

Daisy brightened at once. Her sanguine spirits rose at even that respite.

"I will be so good, so tender and thoughtful for his comfort, that he cannot help loving me by that time," she said.

It was settled finally that Daisy should follow her husband to London, and that the Continental trip should be undertaken if his consent could be obtained.

Lady Violet should meanwhile remain at Eaglescliffe in strict seclusion, and watched over by her faithful Miggins.

"And now," said Lady Violet, "I have a few questions to ask you in my own interests. When you were staying in London so long, you must have known something of Conway's associates, his friendships, and enmities. It is useless to expect his assistance in unravelling the web in which he has involved me. He will hold the secret from revenge, if for no other reason. Was he intimate with Beatrix Dudevant?"

"Intimate? He went there a great deal, but plenty of others went, too. She always had a crowd about her."

My lady hesitated a moment; then, with her face slightly averted, she asked:

"Did Captain Evelyn visit there at that time?"

"I don't know Captain Evelyn."

"Did Conway ever speak of him to you in those days?"

"Never. Why?"

"Nothing," answered my lady, softly. "Only, if by any possibility, it could have been he who put this ring on my finger that night." She paused some moments, her face averted; and to Daisy's rather impatient "Well?" replied carelessly: "It would be better than an old man like Sir Jasper. That is all."

"Well, why might it not be?"

"For the simple reason that, beside being too sensible a gentleman to let himself be so deceived, Conway and he could not have been on such terms of intimacy as the circumstances indicate Conway and his dupe must have been at that time. Beatrix Dudevant knew enough about matters to cause that

letter to be written to papa; could she have known the truth? Were she and Conway intimate enough to warrant his putting so much confidence in her at the time?"

Daisy made a contemptuous movement, and said scornfully:

"He never told her anything; it is not his way. And he would not have told a flimsy thing like her."

Lady Violet replied, thoughtfully:

"Perhaps not. Were Conway and Sir Joseph Townly friends?"

"I often saw them together in the park; but Vane always spoke of him with dislike and contempt."

"Could Conway have been jealous of Sir Jasper? Did he care enough for Beatrix?"

"He cared for her—yes," acknowledged Daisy, reluctantly.

Lady Violet paused for a short time, apparently for reflection, then continued:

"Sir Jasper Townley was an old man. The man who led me up to the altar that night must have resembled Conway in general appearance, or I should have detected the difference. I remember in particular that, as he bent to put the ring on my finger, his long black beard hung between me and the dim light of the lamps."

"Sir Jasper might have worn a beard. I don't remember as to that. He was much of a dandy. I remember hearing that he dyed his hair. Perhaps his beard was also dyed," replied Daisy, meditatively.

"If Sir Jasper is dead and Conway should die suddenly, I may never know who I married that day, certainly," Lady Violet said, with some bitterness.

"You might search the church records," suggested Daisy.

"I might, if I knew what church records to search," answered Lady Violet; "though it is not likely Conway would leave any trace there. Eleanor Lyle may know how to find the church we went to that night; but she is like all the other adjuncts of that miserable affair—a mystery. I wish I could find Eleanor. It was very singular her going off so, and never writing back to us only that one time. I have wondered lately whether Conway could have had anything to do with the mystery of her going."

Daisy turned upon her sharply.

"It is not likely," she said. "He does not do all the mischief there is done."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE mortal terror that thrilled through Eleanor Lyle—for it was indeed she—at the unexpected appearance of Conway, words could not express. If he had threatened her with death, the last time they two had been together, her fear would not have been so great as it was now. But she did not move or utter a word, indeed she could not. Her veil being still down, and being thick, Conway had still the fragment of a doubt that it was she, notwithstanding his assertion. He leaned toward her as she sat like one paralyzed, and at that moment, a firm hand was laid upon his shoulder.

He turned, and beheld Eleanor's companion—the gentleman who had entered the carriage with her and quitted it again—but only for a moment.

"Your pardon, sir," said the stranger, "but are you an acquaintance of this lady? This lady is my wife, sir, and knows no one in London; perhaps you took her for some one else."

The speaker was tall and fine-looking, his hair slightly tinged with gray, his expression one of deep melancholy. Conway did not at once recognise him, though, as the reader may remember, he had met him before. His calm, impressive manner affected him.

He responded, politely:

"My name is Conway. I certainly did take this lady for an old friend. May I inquire who I have the honour of addressing?"

"Sir Jamieson Lowndes," said the baronet, with a stately bow. "Lady Lowndes is an invalid."

Conway muttered some half-audible apology, and retreated. He was not satisfied that the lady was not Eleanor Lyle, but he was too cautious to push matters any farther, openly.

He however relinquished his intention of stopping in London, and secured at once a return ticket, resolved to watch this unknown lady and her companion.

Immensely to his relief, they left the train at a station about halfway to Eaglescliffe, and watching, he saw them enter a carriage which seemed waiting, and drive rapidly off into the darkness.

He pondered on this unexpected turn of affairs, for he had persuaded himself that it was really Eleanor Lyle, in spite of that testimony to her death which he had found in the Thames station house, and the conviction remained with him.

He ascertained, by inquiry, that the gentleman with Eleanor was really Sir Jamieson, that he had been insane, and that he had lately recovered and married his nurse.

"That explains matters," said Conway to himself. "I thought I ought to know him—but I must return at once to Eaglescliffe. With my usual faculty for blundering, I have told Eleanor by my suspicion of her what she might not have known before. If Sir Jamieson's wife is Eleanor Lyle, her attention will now be drawn, if it has not been before, to what has happened at Eaglescliffe, and she will take measures to let Lady Violet know what she knows of the truth. In Sir Jamieson's situation, they have probably lived very secluded, hence, she has not learned what has happened before. Fortunately, I took measures to keep the matter out of the newspapers."

He leaned back in his seat, and while the train thundered on through the obscurity, mused upon his plans, which this meeting with Eleanor Lyle had somewhat deranged.

"I shall have to take Lady Violet *à-brav* with me," he mused. Ah! if he had guessed how safe Lady Violet really was from him! As yet, before the mental vision of none of the three loomed any real prescience of that tragedy which lay hidden in the future. Daisy herself, in her intimate knowledge of this man's bad and reckless nature, shuddered sometimes at the thought of his finding out the truth. But she was of a light and sanguine temper, and secure in the present, put forebodings as far from her as possible. "It will not be safe now," Conway continued, "to have my charming wife at Eaglescliffe, where Eleanor Lyle might pounce upon her at any time. I wonder if my lady could not be induced to make a will in my favour." His eyes sparkled at the thought. "It would be better than staying to be sneered at by these titled gentry as a returned convict," he resumed, answering some inward train of thought.

His arrival at Eaglescliffe was most unexpected; but the faithful Miggs was able to give the sisters ample warning of his approach, and when he pretended to his wife that it was his anxiety concerning her, and the thought of her loneliness, that had brought him back so immediately, foolish Daisy was in raptures, and hung upon his neck till he almost shook her from him.

She was in a state of simple ecstasy at his proposition that she should return to London with him, and thence go upon the Continent for an extended tour.

Lady Violet was not credulous. But as she could

give no good reason for the misgiving that filled her, she kept it to herself. As for Conway, Daisy's joy was distasteful to him. It filled him with uneasiness. The suspicion that he was being somehow cheated in spite of his cunning would intrude itself upon him. He hurried his wife in her preparations for departure, few and simple as they were.

"I don't feel easy here," he said to himself. "Perhaps it's these servants. I'll have new ones if I ever come back here to live."

In the midst a new complication arose. The lawyers, those respectable gentlemen who had in charge the legal affairs of Eaglescliffe and had already been put off twice, wrote now a third time, to know when it would be Lady Violet's pleasure and convenience to see them. The letter fell into Conway's hands, and he read it first.

"We can see them while we are in London," was the dictum he pronounced in his wife's frightened ears.

At the first moment she smuggled the letter away to her sister.

A pity it was that Conway could not have seen the haughty anger that dilated the young countess' delicate nostrils at the sight of her mutilated letter.

"How dare he open it, even supposing it to be yours?" she exclaimed, with indignation.

"I shouldn't have thought he would," assented Daisy, intent upon the more difficult question. "What will we do now, Violet? He says we must see the lawyers while we are in London."

"You must insist upon waiting to see them here," said Lady Violet decidedly; "there is nothing else you can do."

"I can't do that," sighed Daisy. "I have proposed it. Vane will not listen to it an instant."

"Do you start at night or in the morning?"

"At night."

"You always wear your mask, Daisy, even when you are alone with—him?"

"More than ever then," said Daisy, with a sigh.

"If you had any spirit of your own—any nerve, I mean—we could manage it."

"I've got nerve enough where he is concerned," said Daisy.

"Well, yes, perhaps you have. Well, then, I shall have to go to London in your place."

Daisy started.

"You can be in the same train, child, and rejoin your husband after the business has been attended to. There will be some papers to sign, and you couldn't do that, you know."

"But—I don't see how—" began Daisy, pitifully.

"Easily enough. I shall wear a linen mask like yours, of course; and otherwise we look alike. I am not afraid."

"But, oh, Violet! if anything should happen!" cried Daisy, her heart in her mouth.

"I shall take care that nothing does happen," replied Lady Violet, resolutely; and the daring girl meant what she said. She imagined herself perfectly equal to the task she had undertaken, revolting as it was in every sense. It was so tired so, and Daisy, who had stolen away to her sister's secluded apartments, returned to her husband.

At the appointed hour the grand Eaglescliffe carriage, which was to take them to the station, drew up to the door. The travelling paraphernalia of baggage, &c., had been sent on before; and Daisy had also gone before, under charge of Miggs, who had undertaken to manage her till she joined her husband.

It was Lady Violet herself who came out to the carriage with Conway, her slender, graceful person robed in soft, falling folds of black, and disguised by a large shawl. She was closely veiled; but with a daring that was part of her nature, she threw up her veil just before she entered the carriage, and showed her linen-covered face to the servants assembled to see them off. They were a gloomy, not to say sullen crowd. The proud lips of the young countess, their mistress, quivered with feeling behind her mask, as she noted their downcast faces. She could not trust herself to speak; but before Conway could hinder her she turned back, and in spite of his grumbling, shook hands silently with every one.

The women were all sobbing as she entered the carriage; the men said their "God bless you, my lady," in unsteady voices.

Lady Violet had a very spirited bearing, a peculiarly elastic and undulating step. It was perhaps that which drew Conway's glance with a slightly startled expression after her, as she moved among her excited retainers.

He made no remark as he assisted her into the carriage, but he noticed the aerial lightness with which she skimmed as it were past his hand, and sank into her seat.

They were not alone. Fidele occupied a seat in the carriage, and in her delight at the prospect of seeing her beautiful France, was in the highest spirits.

Lady Violet leaned back, and drew down her veil.

"Does your head ache, my lady?" asked the maid, and my lady said "yes."

When they reached the station the train was not yet due for some minutes, and they went into the waiting-room, a chance which Lady Violet would have liked to avoid, for fear of encountering her sister and Miggs. These two had, however, stationed themselves in the obscurity just outside a door opposite the one by which Conway and his companion had entered. Conway did not notice them.

What he did see, and which struck Lady Violet almost nerveless for the moment, was Beatrice Dudevant and Captain Evelyn established upon one of the settees, also waiting for the train, it seemed.

Lady Violet sank upon the first seat that presented itself. Conway stood fiercely pulling his whiskers, and trying to look unconscious. His emotions were very mingled, but malicious triumph predominated, as he looked at the man who had been willing to barter a world, had it been his to give, for the blessed privilege of calling Lady Violet his wife. No blight upon those worshipped features could ever make her any less dear to him.

Through her veil the young countess watched Captain Evelyn in suppressed agitation. It was some moments before she could subdue the throbbing of her heart.

Neither Captain Evelyn nor Miss Dudevant, after the first, glanced that way. Beatrice chattered on with even more than her usual volubility; her companion responded mechanically, but with courtesy.

The last time Captain Evelyn and Conway had met, it will be remembered, the latter had been left senseless upon the ground, from a blow from the former's hand. Upon what terms Lady Violet and Beatrice Dudevant had parted, the reader may also remember.

All things considered, therefore, it was not surprising that the four did not rush into each other's arms.

The transit from the waiting-room to the train was made without accident of any kind. Miggs, catching sight of Miss Dudevant and Captain Evelyn, kept herself and her charge well out of range of the former's sharp eyes.

Lady Violet's emotions, on finding herself journeying to London beside Conway, must have been of a very peculiar description. It is not impossible that she thought of another time when she had made the same journey, and the misery it entailed upon her. Perhaps she remembered the disobedience, the folly, the wilfulness which prompted that journey, and wondered, as she had so many other times, if, indeed, it were possible that she had once so cared for the man, the thought of whom now made her shudder with loathing.

The headache of which Fidele had spoken, was excuse enough for her silence, and the reserve of her manner towards Conway. But he noticed both wonderingly; his wife was so in the habit of hanging upon him, of chattering in his ear of her love for him, or reproaching him for not caring for her now that she had lost her good looks. Once or twice, when he addressed Lady Violet casually, something in her voice thrilled him as Daisy's did not, low as Lady Violet took care to speak, and closely as the voices of the sisters resembled each other.

When they reached London, to Lady Violet's horror, Conway took her to a hotel. She had not expected to go to her own town house. That had not been opened for more than a day or two at a time for several years, and Conway's whim had been not to go to it now. He had a good reason, he thought, for wishing to avoid it. But, oddly enough, Lady Violet in her calculations had planned to attend to the business for which she had come the first thing. That such a course was impossible, she realised only when Conway, with some ill-humour, reminded her that lawyers did not eat, drink, and sleep at their offices. She had the satisfaction, however, upon looking back from the carriage, of seeing Miggs and her sister in conference with a cabman. Doubtless they would follow, and be at hand at the right time, at the same hotel.

"There's one comfort," she said to herself, "Miggs is sensible and true; she'll do the right thing, if the right thing can be done."

But she could not contemplate without serious disquiet the thought of removing her outer wrapping in Conway's presence, of breakfasting *tête-à-tête* with him. How could she ever eat with her mask on? And what if he should ask her to take it off?

She resolved to decline breakfast, though she was nearly famishing, and pretend illness till the hour for seeing her lawyers.

They went to one of the West End hotels, and took a handsome suite of apartments.

Conway, whose sensitiveness concerning his wife's scarred face was made apparent at every opportunity, informed her that a messenger should sum-

mon Morke and Hardle, the lawyers, to wait upon her at her own apartments. It would save time, he said, and he did not wish to stop in London longer than was absolutely necessary.

Lady Violet assented by her silence. She was chary of letting him hear the sound of her voice, for she imagined that he listened to it with remarkable attention whenever she did speak.

To her immense relief, Conway, having ordered breakfast to be sent up, announced that he had an engagement to breakfast with a friend, and took his departure.

Had Lady Violet looked from her carriage a second time, as she was driven to the hotel, her uneasiness would have been seriously increased.

Beatrice Dudevant possessed effrontery enough for anything. But for Captain Evelyn's presence, she would have approached Lady Violet without scruple, in the waiting-room at Chester. She longed, with all the malice of her disappointed and envious heart, to insult her with the offer of her hypocritical condolence upon her misfortune—her ruined beauty—and her as hypocritical congratulations upon her marriage with Conway. But, as I have said, she was restrained by the presence of Captain Evelyn.

She had quitted the Nest in the most unblushing manner, and with the flimsiest of excuses, as soon as he announced his intention of departure therefrom, and was going up to London now under his escort. At the station, upon their arrival, her own carriage awaited her; and Roy Evelyn, having seen her within it, excused himself, to her great disgust.

There was the usual cram of vehicles of various kinds, and as her own lingered, waiting for a passage to be made for them, Miss Dudevant looked discontentedly from the window. She saw Conway and Lady Violet, with Fidele, enter a carriage and drive off, and almost immediately afterward she caught sight of Miggs and her charge just entering a cab.

Miggs she knew at once. The little governess would have found it difficult to disguise her thin, small figure, and, having just had a glimpse of Captain Evelyn in the distance, she had riskily concluded that Miss Dudevant was with him, and so proceeded fearlessly to secure a carriage to follow Lady Violet.

Miss Dudevant continued to watch her, wondering who her companion could be, and vaguely thinking that the figure was like Lady Violet's, when, in getting into the cab, Daisy's veil caught in a projection of the door, and was torn completely off. She replaced it instantly in a great fright, but Miss Dudevant had seen the strange white mask, and fancied she recognised a gesture of Lady Violet's.

She turned to Sparks, and caught her arm. "What can it mean? We just saw Conway and his wife drive away, didn't we?" she demanded of her maid.

"Yes, to be sure, miss. Why?" asked Sparks, who had not been so observant as her mistress.

"Because there is Lady Violet now with that Miggs creature of hers—there in that cab with the black horse. Do you see them?"

"I see Miggs, and I see a woman with a veil," said Sparks. "Don't be impertinent, Sparks. I should like to know what it means."

Miss Dudevant relapsed into silence, watching the cab with malicious eyes as it drove off.

She suspected some sort of a hoax, and assured herself, in view of Captain Evelyn having come up in the same train, that she could put two and two together. But though she drove off through the London streets in a towering passion, it was more from the difficulty she found in shaping her own suspicions than anything else. If she had known to what hotel Conway had gone, she would not have scrupled to follow for the sake of satisfying her devouring curiosity.

Chance favoured her. She had not been home two hours when Vane Conway's card was brought to her. She flew to meet him, just as she was, in a soiled and rumpled morning dress. The belle was not careful of her personal appearance when there was no one particular to see.

Before Conway could enter upon the business which had brought him—important business, too he considered it—Miss Dudevant had poured forth the story of her wonderment concerning the two Lady Violets, and demanded, as though she had a right to know, who it was with him.

Conway turned livid as she spoke. In excessive agitation and excitement he questioned her and made her repeat what she had told him. Then, without satisfying her curiosity in the least, leaving her indeed in a most pitiable state of mind, everything considered, he darted away, and entering the carriage which had brought him there, ordered the man to drive at his best pace back to the hotel, where he had left Lady Violet.

His own suspicions and doubts returned to him with redoubled force during that drive. By the

time he reached the hotel he had worked himself into a state of mingled fury and excitement that few women would have cared to encounter. He would have burst into his wife's apartments without ceremony, but the door was locked. Fidele opened it, staring at his working features in the utmost wonder and consternation. He strode through that and the next apartment without a word and flung open the door of the bed-room. The blinds were closed to darken the room. A figure was dimly discerned upon the bed in the recess beyond.

"My lady," he said, in a constrained and slightly sarcastic tone, "I am very sorry to disturb you, but I have business of importance to discuss with you."

The figure on the bed roused with a violent start at the sound of his voice, and rose to a sitting posture.

"Will you be good enough to take that thing off?" he said, indicating the mask; and then, as a pair of nervous hands essayed to loosen the ribbons which held the linen in its place and failed to move rapidly enough for his impatience, he drew a small stiletto from some hiding place on his person and severed the strings with his shining blade.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

WHEN Conway had quitted the hotel a few hours before, he had left the woman he supposed to be his wife apparently buried in a deep slumber.

Lady Violet's anxiety concerning her sister and Miggs was very great. Far from permitting herself any rest, weary as she was, she rose from her couch the instant she was sure Conway had departed.

Her first proceeding was to send Fidele away. The maid was glad enough of permission to go out and look up some old friends.

A few moments after, the breakfast Conway had ordered came. The man stared furtively at Lady Violet's mask, which she still wore.

His wonderment was increased when she sent him away, saying she would ring if she wanted anything.

Then, having locked the door after him, she proceeded to remove her mask, with a sigh of relief and a wonder how Daisy could bear to wear it continuously.

In the midst came a low knock upon the outer door of the communicating rooms, and, with some trepidation, she hurried on her mask and went to open it.

It was Miggs.

The faithful creature had followed them to the very hotel, and taken rooms in the same part of the house. She had watched till she saw Conway go out, and afterwards Fidele, and here she was. She recounted hurriedly to Lady Violet the incident at the station.

She had seen Miss Dudevant when it was too late, and rightly interpreted that lady's broad stare of wonder and angry dismay, when Daisy's veil came off.

"She'll be coming here prying, you may be sure of that," she said to Lady Violet. "Your sister is nearly wild about it."

"I don't know why she should be," said Lady Violet; "I am a great deal more capable of managing Beatrice Dudevant, if she comes, than Daisy is."

"I know you are; but she will not be convinced."

While Miggs was speaking, came another knock. "I think it is your sister," said Miggs; but she hid in a large wardrobe in the sleeping room, for fear, while Lady Violet opened the door.

It was Daisy, and she declared she had come to remain, and insisted upon Lady Violet going back with Miggs instead of herself.

"But the lawyers are coming by twelve," exclaimed Lady Violet, in despair.

"It is more than four hours till then," persisted her sister, "and I know Miss Dudevant's disposition. If she comes here she will insist upon seeing under your mask, and if Vane is in the room, what then?"

"Miss Dudevant will scarcely force her presence upon me, if I do not choose to see her," said Lady Violet.

"She might."

Meanwhile, the untasted meal waited, and Lady Violet declaring herself unable for any further discussion till she had eaten it, coolly sat down to the table.

Daisy was in an agony of nervousness and impatience, but my lady ate composedly, without seeming to notice it, when there came a third summons at the door of the ante-chamber.

Miggs flew into the wardrobe again, and Lady Violet seized her mask.

Daisy stood palpitating with horror.

"It is Vane; oh, I am sure it is Vane!" she cried, wringing her hands.

"It is nothing of the kind," said her sister, tranquilly. "Don't you know his knock better than that?" and went to the door herself.

It was Fidele this time. She had not found the friends she went to see, and so came back.

Lady Violet admitted her, locked the door again, and desiring her to remain in the ante-room, returned to Daisy and Miggs.

"My lady seems more like herself since we came away from Eaglescliffe," commented Fidele, inwardly. "I never saw such a change in any one—ah, ciel, never."

"Now, then," said Lady Violet, after she had closed the door between them and Fidele, "which is it to be?"

And, as if in reply to the question, Miggs, who had been drawn to the window by some sound, exclaimed:

"Here is Mr. Conway back, and he looks excited."

"I told you so," gasped Daisy.

"Be still," said Lady Violet, in a whisper, unlocking the door into the ante-chamber. "Go and lie down upon the couch in the bedroom. Miggs and I will hide in the wardrobe, and watch our chance to get away—that is, if you will not go, and leave me to meet him."

Daisy's answer was to hurry toward the bed-room, and her sister and Miggs followed her.

Fortunately the wardrobe was quite empty, and large, so that the two had no difficulty in finding good standing room within it.

"It is as well to have the key on our side," Lady Violet coolly remarked, as she changed it from the outer to the inner side, and locked the door after them. "What could have happened?" whispered she to her companion, as they heard Conway's impatient summons at the locked door of the ante-room.

"He has seen Miss Dudevant," answered Miggs, in tones of conviction. "She saw you with him, and then she saw what seemed to be you with me, and she has told him."

Conway had by this time made an entrance, and they heard him come striding through to the bedroom and throw open the blind. Neither dared stir, or scarcely breathe, lest he should hear, for the wardrobe stood but a few paces from the bed. Lady Violet felt her blood tingle with anger as she heard him address his wife.

"If it only were I he is talking to, he would get such an answer as he is not looking for," she said.

As the mask fell, the strings severed by the sharp blade in Conway's hand, he bent a look of eager scrutiny on his wife's scarred features.

"Who came with Miss Miggs from Eaglescliffe?" he demanded of his wife, severely but still not with disrespect or any coarseness of manner.

"With Miggs? Why her aunt. Didn't you know that?" moving so as to bring her face against his shoulder.

"How did Miss Miggs' aunt come to wear a mask precisely like yours?"

Daisy broke into a laugh, which was very well done, everything considered.

"It was mine," she said; "something was the matter with the poor old lady's face, and I told Miggs to take one of my masks. She was fretting so about her taking cold, and you know it did turn chilly yesterday. You didn't see her in the street and take her for me, did you, Vane? Was that what brought you back so soon?"

Conway did not answer at once. He pondered a moment.

"So that was Beatrice Dudevant's mare's nest," he said to himself, immensely relieved.

He had had no definite suspicion, only the same vague distrust which had haunted him ever since that extraordinary seeming change in the haughty and imperious young Countess of Eaglescliffe. He was ready to laugh at his own doubts now, and in the exuberance of his satisfaction he took a seat upon the couch, beside his wife, and drawing her to him, kissed her.

Daisy's loving heart leaped at the caress. She clung to him with a sob.

Conway was touched. It was some time since his heart had given one answering throb of tenderness to his wife's passionate devotion. But he looked down at her, almost tenderly at this moment.

"I find it very hard to believe that it was only pride actuated you in your treatment of me before—this—accident," he said, passing his hand over her face.

"Oh! it was, it was!" exclaimed Daisy. As she spoke, something fell with a ringing sound upon the floor of the wardrobe. Conway started and looked towards it.

Daisy's heart stood still.

(To be continued.)

COURT FEES.—The fees received in stamps in the superior Courts of Common Law in the year ending the 31st of March, 1870, amounted to 91,598*l.*, being 2,499*l.* less than in the preceding year. The decrease was chiefly in the Court of Queen's Bench; in the Exchequer there was an increase. The salaries, pensions, and expenses charged on the fee fund amounted to 98,043*l.*

leaving a deficiency of 6,445. The fees received in the Court of Probate and Divorce in the year amounted to 134,070.; the payments for compensations (a decreasing account), salaries, &c., amounted to 189,078., so that there was a deficiency of 55,008. In the Admiralty Court the fees received produced 8,446., but the payments charged on the fund reached 16,084., leaving a deficiency of 7,638. In the Land Registry the year's fees were 1,280., but the payments were 5,684., leaving a deficiency of 4,404. The total excess of expenditure over receipts in respect of the Courts of Probate and Admiralty and the Land Registry (exclusive of the salaries of the judges) was therefore 67,050.

HUBERT DE NEVILLE.

"*THY daughter, the beautiful Blanche, still refuses to receive my addresses, nay, she even dared to tell me that she loved another, even Hubert de Neville.*" And as the speaker finished, his lip curled with unwinding pride, and his hand wandered unwittingly to his sabre hilt.

Baron Morelli's eye grew stern, and he knit his brow in anger.

"Hubert de Neville," he answered in low and ominous tones, "never dare to breathe one word to me of his love for Blanche; he knew too well the proud blood that coursed in these veins." And the haughty baron drew his manly form up to its utmost height. "But, if 'tis thy pleasure, Count Roscoe," he added, after a moment's silence, "that Blanche become thy bride ere this week shall close, it shall be even so; for when Morelli commands, his daughter dare not disobey him."

"It is well," returned the count, with a smile of triumph, "and Blanche is my betrothed." Then bidding Baron Morelli a hasty good-morning, he was soon out of sight.

For a few moments the baron stood absorbed deep in thought, and he half repented of his rash vow. But his word had been given, and that could not be broken. Suddenly starting from his reverie, he retraced with slow and measured steps his way back to the castle.

One word, by way of introduction.

Morelli was a rich German baron. Being naturally of a wild, romantic turn of mind, he had been lured from his early home by the beautiful scenery of Switzerland. His castle was situated in the pretty town of Geneva. 'Twas a noble edifice, built in the old Gothic style. It stood on a small eminence that overlooked the silvery waters of the beautiful Lake Geneva, which lay at a short distance, in tranquil beauty. Four years previous to the time our story commences, his wife, the gentle and beloved baroness, had died, leaving three children, Harold, a dark-haired youth of eighteen; Blanche, a fair-haired timid girl, just entering her fifteenth year, and Isadore, a beautiful infant, the idol of the household.

Proud, aristocratic himself, Baron Morelli had vainly striven to instil the same principles into the minds of his children. But they had too early imbibed the more gentle nature of the baroness to be turned easily aside.

For a few months the baron had been making it his chief object to form an alliance between Blanche and Count Roscoe, whom we have previously mentioned. He was a native of Poland, and of high and noble parentage.

There had been a brilliant ball given on the eve of his arrival from a long tour. Among the many fairy forms that glided along in the many dance on that evening, Count Roscoe had observed the slight but elegant figure of Blanche. Dazzled with the bewitching beauty of her wild, dark eye, he sought an introduction. And as he listened to the witching cadence of her sweet voice, he resolved, if possible, to win so fair a prize. But he was too late; Blanche loved another, and her first vows of love had been pledged to the gay chevalier, Hubert de Neville. But it was a secret. None knew beside themselves, save Harold, the brother of Blanche, until, in an unguarded moment, a note written by Hubert was misplaced, and read by the enraged baron.

After this Blanche was closely confined to the castle and narrowly watched. But, through the trusty Harold, whom none suspected, Blanche found means to convey to, and receive communication from Hubert. It was after several unsuccessful attempts on the part of Count Roscoe to secure the affection of the fair Blanche, he had sought her father in anger. The conversation that ensued we have detailed.

By taking a circuitous route, Baron Morelli had nearly reached the castle unobserved, and he lingered long amid the dark trees, listening to the rich tones of Blanche's voice, as she sang a low, plaintive air, accompanied by her lute. Isadore sat at her feet, surrounded by the wild flowers she had just re-

turned from gathering. Her little white arms were thrown carelessly around the neck of her Newfoundland dog, and her velvet cheek rested against his shaggy coat. As Blanche caught a glimpse of her father's figure, she commenced singing a gay waltz—it was his favourite, and she welcomed him with her brightest smile.

After speaking a moment of the beauty of the morning, he requested Blanche to meet him in his room, as he wished to speak with her alone. Then he said, addressing Isadore:

"You can amuse yourself awhile with Carlo on the lawn."

Half vexed at being deprived of her sister's company, Isadore pouted her short rosy lip in childish impatience, and pushed with her tiny foot the music book that had fallen to the floor as she arose, but one glance from Blanche dispelled her ill-humour, and she bounded lightly away, followed by Carlo, in pursuit of a gay butterfly that had been startled from its resting-place on a gaudy tulip, by her clear, silvery laugh.

When Blanche entered her father's room, she found him waiting, and he motioned her to sit beside him. For awhile the baron's heart misgave him, and he gazed in silence on the beautiful victim, about to be sacrificed on the altar of a father's proud ambition.

"Blanche," at length he said, "of late thy cheek has paled, and thy dark eye has lost much of its wonted brilliancy; thy songs, too, are less gay and less frequent; whence is it?" and Baron Morelli placed his hand fondly on the head of his gentle child.

"Will the fragile floweret," Blanche replied, with a sad smile, "grow as luxuriantly when 'tis shut from the sun's bright beams and the rich breath of heaven? Or, will the note of the wild bird be as sweet when confined to its little prison, as when it warbles its song in its native grove?" Her voice grew tremulous as she continued: "There was a time when, like the young fawn, I wandered through the greenwood, and no suspicious eye watched my unwary foot, or noted if I strayed farther than I was wont; but now—" and burying her young face in her hands she wept passionately.

The baron's heart was touched.

"Thou shalt be confined no longer, Blanche, if 'twill bring back the stolen roses to thy cheek; go, take thy morning ramble with Isadore."

Smiling through her tears, the beautiful girl arose to depart.

"Blanche, Blanche," exclaimed the baron, suddenly recollecting his morning's message, which in the anxiety for his child he had quite forgotten, "dost thou still reject Count Roscoe?"

Not daring to trust herself to speak, Blanche merely bowed her beautiful head.

Baron Morelli's dark eye flashed. "Say at least," he continued, "that thou dost not love Hubert de Neville." Blanche shook her head mournfully.

"Listen, then," he added, sternly, "before the crescent moon shall have departed, thou wilt be the Count Roscoe's bride, for I have sworn it." And he left the room in anger.

With clasped hands, Blanche leaned against the marble pillar in silent agony.

A few moments had elapsed when Harold entered the room.

"One of thy gayest songs, my sweet sister," he said, playfully. "I am very sad to-day. In tears, Blanche!" he exclaimed in surprise; "say, sister mine, has aught befallen thy gallant knight?" And with playful gallantry he dropped gracefully on one knee before her; seeing his usual efforts to win back her smile did not succeed, he added in a serious tone, "Canst thou not confide in Harold? Come, Blanche." Before she had time to reply, he drew her arm within his own, and led her to a seat.

"That was unlike my father," he exclaimed, angrily, after listening to Blanche's recital. "Now listen to another vow," he continued, slowly, and decidedly, "Twice only shall the sun's bright morning beams shine on these walls, ere my pretty Blanche shall be the bride of Hubert de Neville, for I have sworn it," and he repeated his father's words in bitter irony. After a moment's pause, "I will go," he said, "and apprise Hubert of this, I shall be back by sunset; in the meantime, make preparations to leave the castle."

Blanche watched his quick steps till he was out of sight, and then turned back to weep.

The sun was nearly hid behind the dark hills, and Blanche strolled forth to meet her brother.

"What can have detained him?" she mused, as the evening shadows fell darkly around.

And she was about to retrace her steps, when her quick ear caught the sound of footsteps, and soon Harold was by her side. In a few words Blanche was informed of their plan.

Harold was to secure the keys of the castle under

pretext of being out on a hunting excursion. And that night, at the hour of twelve, Blanche was to make her escape from the castle. Harold was to accompany her to the margin of the lake, where would be found waiting a little bridal party, consisting of the sisters of Hubert, and his beautiful cousin, Isabelle. They were to be married before they departed in accordance with Harold's vow.

As they drew near the castle they separated, that none might suspect them. 'Twas night. When a was silent, Blanche arose from her sleepless couch. The more readily to effect her escape, she attired herself in the simple costume of the village maidens, and the snowy folds of her dress fell like summer clouds round the fairy form of their young mistress. She wore a little straw hat encircled with orange blossoms, as her bridal wreath. Her hair was unadorned, save by a white rosebud that served to loop back the dark curls that fell carelessly round her neck. Her toilette was soon finished.

Then, for the last time, she lingered among her rich flowers. As she stood by a beautiful magnolia, a tear fell on its delicately-tinted leaves. It was presented by her mother on her fourteenth birthday. She gathered one of its choicest flowers, and pressed it between the leaves of a small gilt Bible she held in her hand. Then, with slow and noiseless steps, she sought to take one last fond look of the gentle Isadore. The moon had just rolled from behind a dark cloud, and gleamed sadly through the casement. With breath held close, she bent fondly over the little dreamer. One little hand was thrown over the snowy covering, the other held tightly a garland of flowers. The same childish smile still lingered on her lips, and once the name of Blanche fell from the unconscious sleeper.

For awhile Blanche was irresolute—could she leave the little innocent, that had never known a mother's care, in the hands of strangers? But twas only for a moment. Love conquered; and severing a bright, sunny curl that lay playfully on her forehead, breathed a short, silent prayer over her, then left the lovely sleeper to enjoy her bright dreams alone.

The bell of the cathedral tolled twelve. And softly opening the massive door of the castle, Blanche, like a timid fawn, glided swiftly away. Faithful to his promise, Harold met her at the small rivulet that danced along on its mazy course through the glen. Startled by the rustling of every leaf, Blanche clung timidly to her brother's hand.

"Is not that the sound of footsteps?" she exclaimed in breathless terror. Harold laughed at her fears.

"'Tis the falling of the distant water, or perchance 'tis the beating of thy own gentle heart, Blanche."

Urged by her brother's fearless tone, the timid girl soon gained confidence, and joined with him in laughing at her idle fears.

A few moments, and they have reached the happy group. Hubert took the small, white hand of Blanche. Then the clergyman pronounced the few and simple words that united the destinies of Hubert and Blanche for ever. After exacting a promise from Harold to communicate all tidings from the castle, they stepped lightly into a boat that had been concealed by the shore, and plying the light oars, were soon on their way far over the blue waters.

In the morning all was consternation at the castle, and Blanche was sought far and wide, Harold appearing to be the most engaged in the search to escape suspicion.

Let us now return to Blanche. In a beautiful cottage a lovely woman is sitting at an open window, wreathed with honeysuckle and jessamine. In her hand is an open letter; a rosy-cheeked boy stands beside her, ever and anon lifting his watchful blue eye, as he despoils a beautiful rose of its delicate buds, to see if his little mischief is noticed.

'Tis Blanche and her little Hubert. Tidings have just reached them in a letter from Harold that the baron is reconciled. And, unknown to his father, he invites them home.

"'Tis five years to-day, since Blanche left," Baron Morelli exclaimed, sadly, to Harold one day, as they were sitting alone in his room. "I am lonely, very lonely;" and as a sense of his bereavement came over him, he sighed deeply.

He had scarcely uttered the words, when a beautiful boy entered the room.

"Come here, child!" exclaimed the baron, and placing his hand on the dimpled arm, he drew the child near him.

Long and earnestly did Baron Morelli gaze on the features of the little one beside him. No, no; a father could not be mistaken; certainly, those deep, expressive eyes, that broad, white brow, the curling of the pretty lip were very, very like his dear, lost Blanche.

Vainly did the baron seek to hide his emotion.

But as thoughts of that bright, happy being, whom in his heart's blind idolatry he would have died to save, and who, but for his own rash act, would have been there still to cheer him in his loneliness—as such thoughts as these passed through his mind, the fountain of that proud, selfish heart was stirred. And tears, hot, scalding tears, coursed down his pale and careworn cheek.

"Where is thy home, fair child? and thy name? Canst thou tell?"

"Hubert de Neville," he answered, in a childish tone.

Baron Morelli started.

"And who are thy parents?" he asked, eagerly.

But ere the little lips could form an answer, the door opened, and Blanche, leaning on the arm of Hubert, and Isadore, laughing happily, entered.

"My father, forgive us!" burst from the lips of Blanche.

And she threw her arms around her father's neck. They were forgiven, and Baron Morelli never regretted that Blanche followed her own choice in marrying Hubert, whom he soon learned to love as well as the wayward Blanche. H. P. H.

LADY BARBARA.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE Lady Barbara lingered in the shadow of the trees upon the cliff long after Lord Champney's sail had disappeared from her view behind a projecting point of land. Gradually her wild terror and excitement gave place to the cold calm of a great despair, and she sat down upon a bench, quiet and self-repressed, an infinite sorrow and apprehension brooding in her rare violet eyes.

The gardener's lad, returning from his errand to Cromer, found her sitting there when he slowly rode up the avenue of Saltair.

Her ladyship started from her calm at sight of him, and beckoned him to approach her.

He came near, dismounted, and approached her on foot, leading his horse by its bridle.

"You saw the colonel?" demanded Lady Barbara, with a feverish anxiety.

"Yes, my lady," responded the lad, bowing his head.

"What did he say?"

"He was in his room at the hotel, my lady, and I went up to him. He read the note and smiled a queer smile, my lady, and says he, 'Tell your lady it shall be as she says,' and he gives me a note, my lady, which here it is."

He produced a dainty-looking little missive, sealed with wax, from his pocket, and gave it into the hands of the Lady Barbara.

She shuddered as she took it, but said quietly:

"You have done well, my lad. Here is the sovereign I promised you."

"My lord came just as I was coming away from the hotel, my lady," said the lad, pocketing the coin. "He was in a dreadful way, my lady, a wanting to know what I was a doing there, but I didn't give up no satisfaction."

The Lady Barbara coloured a little, but managed to say coldly that the errand had concerned Lord Champney's interests, and then, enjoining secrecy upon her messenger, dismissed him to his duties.

Left alone, she tore open the perfumed note with a look of loathing.

Contrary to her expectations, the letter was brief and couched in the most respectful terms. The writer said simply that he should heed her injunctions and keep out of Lord Champney's way for that day, at least, and that he should be happy to obey any further commands she might lay upon him.

The Lady Barbara's lip curled with a proud disdain as she tore the note into tiny scraps and scattered them to the winds.

"So far, then, Sidney is safe!" she murmured, with a deep breath of relief. "He will neither have the crime of murder on his hands, nor will he fall a victim to Effingham's murderous rage. Heaven is merciful. Why have I doubted that mercy in my days of darkness?"

She little dreamed that her own letter to Effingham had been cunningly used by her enemy to widen the gulf between her and her husband.

A great load was lifted from her heart. A glad light came to her eyes—the light of a new-born hope and faith that all might yet be well.

She arose and went into the house, visiting her niece in the chamber of the latter, and commencing and advising upon the bridal festivities already in course of preparation, and then she went to her own rooms overlooking the sea.

The air seemed suddenly dead and stagnant. The Lady Barbara opened her windows wide, and leaned out of one of them scanning the sea.

It lay before her, as far as her eye could reach, as calm and glassy as a mirror. Not a wave disturbed its surface. Not a white cap showed itself anywhere on the blue expanse.

The wind had died out completely. Not a breath of air could be felt.

"How stifling it is!" murmured her ladyship, fanning herself. "We are going to have a storm."

She looked up at the sky. Already black clouds, big with menace, were massing themselves like troops ready for service. Their shadows fell heavily on the stagnant, mirror-like sea.

There were no boats within view. And no sound pulsed through the still air, save the wild screeching of the sea-gulls, as they flew homeward.

"We shall have a heavy storm, and soon," she mused. "Sidney will be warned in time, and come home by land."

With her mind at ease, she went into her dressing-room and made her dinner-toilette.

Presently she came back, exquisitely attired in a robe of pale blue silk, draped heavily with pure white lace, and with diamonds flashing on her neck and arms, and from the pure gold of her fair hair.

Wrapping an opera-cloak about her she went again to the window and looked out.

The sea was still calm as a mirror, but now it was black as pitch, with the shadows of the menacing clouds, still marshalling themselves like a host in the heavens.

The storm was at hand.

Suddenly a zephyr gently stirred the dead air, ruffling the sea into tiny ripples.

"It is coming!" said the Lady Barbara.

Another zephyr thrilled the sea. A low murmur came from the dead looking waters, and was echoed by the trees on the cliff.

Another dead silence—then a gust of wind swept through the trees and about the mansion with a wild, shrill wail—the cry of the coming storm.

A moment later, the storm had broken.

The Lady Barbara, leaning from her window, watched the wild waves leap and toss and hurl themselves in a mad fury against the cliff, flinging back upon the sea the white froth of their anger—watched the high snowy crests far out on the inky waters, and was appalled at the sudden darkness that seemed shutting heavily down upon the scene.

"Heaven pity any boat out in this storm!" she thought.

For some time she stood there, fascinated by the bitter war of the elements, awe-struck and frightened; but suddenly she started, becoming deadly pale, and clung to the window-frame in terror.

She had seen, in a sudden gleam of light, a little pleasure-boat out on a wild sea, her masts and sails bent, as she was being driven towards the rocky coast before the gale.

"It is Sidney's boat!" she cried aloud, in a frenzy. "Oh, Heaven! he is being driven to his death!"

The shadows shut down between the boat and the shore, and she waited for another friendly gleam to reveal to her the position of the endangered craft.

The gleam came, and revealed to her beyond a doubt that the boat was Lord Champney's.

"He may have sent it home by a fisherman," she thought, catching at the slightest straw of hope. "Of course he has!"

She caught up a glass lying on the window-sill, and, waiting for the next rift in the gloom, scanned the boat with wildly questioning eyes.

It was no fisherman who sat in the storm-driven boat, but Lord Champney himself, as her ladyship saw.

His lordship had left Cromer just before the sudden calm, had lain on the waters outside Cromer Bay during the dead lull, but had taken advantage of the earliest breeze to sail homewards. He had been warned by the fishermen in the bay of his danger, but in his desperate mood he had scoffed at their warnings, and found a fierce delight in facing the mad gale before which they were fleeing.

The light and the darkness alternately revealed and concealed the boat and its single occupant, playing with the fears and the anguish of the Lady Barbara.

At last, unable to remain longer in her safe shelter while he was exposed to such terrible peril, the Lady Barbara drew her cloak over her head, and ran downstairs and out upon the cliff, where, clinging to the balustrade, and blown about by the storm, she watched and waited in a breathless suspense.

The storm deepened and raged with a desperate fury, and on drove the little pleasure-boat before it, her sails stripped off, her mast broken short, and her hull the sport of winds and waves.

"He will strike on Cranny beach, a hundred rods above here!" cried her ladyship. "The Cranny rocks will be his death. Heaven help him!"

She ran back to the mansion, and aroused her

household. Then she hurried to the Cranny beach, the butler and his male assistants speedily following with the few appliances that might be needed should Lord Champney be wrecked on the Cranny rocks.

The Cranny beach was a low strip of shingle, intersected with numerous low-lying rocks.

Off the beach were the Cranny rocks, a stretch of half-sunken black rocks, over which the inky, white-crested waters were surging, with the peculiar roar which always characterises breakers.

And it was upon these dangerous rocks that Lord Champney's boat was inevitably drifting!

On it came, leaping the crests, like a tortured animal. His lordship had long since ceased to hold the tiller, or exercise any control over the dismasted craft, and now sat erect, his arms folded across his chest in the stern attitude his wife so well remembered, the salt spray dashing against his cheeks and his hair.

The Lady Barbara paced the beach, moaning and wringing her hands.

At last, the boat was driven full into the breakers—full upon the half-sunken Cranny rocks—and the wife closed her eyes to shut out the horrible peril of him she loved.

"The boat's going to pieces!" cried the butler, excitedly. "There she goes! Oh, my poor lord!"

The Lady Barbara looked instinctively towards the rocks.

The boat had gone to pieces, having struck upon a sharp-pointed rock.

Lord Champney was struggling in the wild foam of waters.

The wife sank on her knees on the wet beach in a voiceless prayer.

The men shouted to each other and to their imperilled master, their voices and the wind creating a horrible confusion in the ears of the anguished woman. A sudden faintness swept over her. A darkness shrouded her vision. She clutched blindly at the empty air, gasping for breath.

A joyful shout at length recalled her to herself.

"He's safe, my lady!" cried the butler. "He's safe ashore!"

She opened her eyes, and beheld lying on the beach, at her very feet, where the sea had cast him, Lord Champney, pale, dripping, and senseless.

She bent over him and felt his pulse.

"He is not dead!" she cried, in a hysterical voice. "We may save him yet. Quick! Help me!"

From that moment she gave herself up to his recovery. She examined his wounds, ordered him to be taken to his chamber and put to bed, and dispatched a servant for the nearest physician, who was at Cromer.

Lord Champney's injuries proved to be serious. His right arm was broken, his shoulder badly contused, and he was in a state of great physical exhaustion.

The doctor, when he came, ordered perfect quiet and absolute rest, declaring that any excitement might prove fatal to him.

Her ladyship, who had constituted herself her husband's nurse, promised that these directions should be observed to the letter.

The physician had scarcely departed when Lord Champney turned restlessly on his pillow, moaning with pain.

The Lady Barbara fancied that he was trying to speak.

"What is it, Sidney?" she asked, bending over him.

The sound of her voice, low and soft and tremulous as it was, and freighted with love, tenderness, and anguish, aroused him from his stupor, as if it had been a trumpet sounding for battle.

He opened his eyes and glared at her.

"Traitor!" he whispered, in bitterness. "False wife, leave me!"

"Oh, Sidney!"

"Leave me, I say! I cannot bear to have you near me. I shall die if you stay here. Are you so anxious for my death that you cannot leave me a minute to myself? Must I be cursed by your presence when I am too weak to defend myself?"

Her ladyship staggered back as if he had dealt her a deadly blow.

"Oh, Sidney!" she murmured, humbly; "Oh, my husband! Hear me—"

"Go!" he interrupted, fiercely. "I know all! Go! And send me the butler."

His manner was so excited and violent that nothing remained to his wife but obedience. She summoned the butler, and went to her own room.

"It is true that he has ceased to love me," she thought, with a sense of desolation keener than any she had yet experienced. "His jealousy no longer springs from an excess of love, but from hatred. Our hearts are indeed sundered!"

Meanwhile Lord Champney gave an order that Felix Warner should be telegraphed for at once, and

a messenger was sent to Norwich to execute the commission.

The Lady Barbara did not return to the invalid's chamber during the remainder of the afternoon nor the evening.

Lord Champney did not once speak his wife's name, but turned his face to the wall, and moaned continually.

At ten o'clock, the butler, who was serving as nurse, administered to his patient the opiate the doctor had commanded, and Lord Champney sank into restless slumbers.

About an hour later, as the butler sat dozing in the dimly-lighted chamber, a low knock was heard on the door, and the Lady Barbara stole in like a spirit.

She had donned a white dressing-gown, and was evidently prepared for a night of watching.

"Is his lordship asleep, Rugg?" she asked, halting near the door and looking wistfully towards the bed.

"Yes, my lady," replied the butler, arousing himself. "He has had a sleeping powder, and won't wake up till morning."

Lady Barbara approached the bed and bent over the sleeper. His brows were contracted with pain, his face was ghastly in its pallor, and he moved restlessly under her glances.

"You look sleepy, Rugg," said her ladyship, turning to the butler. "You may go to bed, and I will watch. If any change occurs in his lordship's condition, I will summon you."

The butler gratefully accepted his release and retired.

Then the Lady Barbara, lowering still further the light, sat down by the bedside, and gathered the bruised and weary head of the sleeper in her arms, pillowing it on her breast.

"My darling!" she whispered, kissing the thin dark cheeks softly, and with an exquisite tenderness. "My poor Sidney! My precious husband!"

As if the loving epithets penetrated his slumbers, he opened his eyes, and looked up into the glorious face above him. But as she shrank back, fearing discovery, his eyelids drooped again heavily, and his breathing became more regular.

It was a long vigil, that of the proud, wronged and loving wife over her husband, but it was not a bitter one. She bathed his face with her tears, and dried it with her kisses. All the passionate pride that distinguished her deserted her now, and she was only the loving, sorrowing, forgiving, tender wife. She whispered in his sleep-sealed ears declarations of her innocence of any wrong, and reproached him with tears for his cruel suspicions of her; and with the swift scarlet blushes dyeing her cheeks, she told him how she loved him.

If he could but have heard her! If he could but have seen the light in her radiant eyes, or marked the sweet and steady smile on her lovely mouth!

How, under all her pride and coldness and just anger, she loved him!

How—if she had but known it—under all his mad and jealous fury, his ceaseless suspicions, he worshipped her!

The hearts of the two were the foot-balls of an enemy, and neither suspected the truth.

Noble, grand, and truthful, well fitted for each other and for domestic happiness, their lives had been a desolation and a ruin, their weaknesses turned into weapons against them by Felix Wamer.

The night came to an end at last, and the summer sunshine, sweet and calm after the storm, streamed softly through the curtains.

"I must go," thought the Lady Barbara, her tears falling. "He may soon awaken. He must not find me here!"

She bent her face to that of her husband, and showered upon his cheeks and brow a rain of passionate kisses. Then she laid the dark head back on the lace-trimmed pillow, and tore herself away.

She touched the bell, summoning the butler, and when he came, she went to her own room.

Lord Champney, however, did not awaken for hours—until near noon—but when he did he was, except for his broken arm and bruises, himself again.

He lay a little while in silence, and then he said:

"Rugg, what time is it?"

"A quarter to twelve, my lord," replied the butler, approaching the bed.

Lord Champney groaned.

"And I had an appointment at noon!" he muttered. "Rugg, you must go down to Cranney beach with a message for me to Colonel Effingham, who will be there."

"I think not, my lord," replied the butler, as his lordship paused. "Colonel Effingham called this morning to see if you got home from Cromer safe—"

"He called?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Did Lady Champney see him?"

"I don't know, my lord. I believe not."

The glitter of Lord Champney's eyes, his laboured breath, and the feverish flush on his cheeks, all frightened the worthy butler, being signs of an intensity of passion such as had never disturbed the peaceful current of his own existence.

His lordship fell back upon the bed without a word. He submitted to the ministrations of his attendant, and his toilette was made, and he was dressed and carried to a low, easy lounge, still without speaking.

Rugg brought him his breakfast, and he ate it in silence, then becoming sternly thoughtful.

About the middle of the afternoon he aroused himself, inquiring:

"Is not that the sound of wheels? Isn't it time for Mr. Wamer to arrive?"

"Just about time, my lord. But I don't hear wheels, and there's no vehicle in the avenue, my lord."

Lord Champney stirred uneasily.

"I had a strange dream last night, Rugg," he said. "A remarkable dream! You watched by me all night?"

"No, my lord. My lady came in and sent me off to bed. My lady watched you!"

Lord Champney started.

"Could the dream—vague and unreal as it seems—could it have been reality?" he asked himself, in a tone too low for the butler's ears. "Was it Barbara's kisses I felt—Barbara's tears that bathed my face? Impossible!"

He tried to recall the experience which seemed to him a dream. He thought of his wife, putting from him the remembrance of the yesterday's experiences, and a strange softness relaxed his stern features, a strange light glowed in his eyes.

"I was very near death yesterday, Rugg?" he said softly.

"Yes, my lord," said the butler. "Poor Lady Barbara saw your boat out half-a-mile, I should think, and she roused the men, and had us all at Cranney beach waiting for you. My poor lady! She looked like death, my lord! She just sunk on her knees and prayed there, and when she fainted I thought she was dead! If you had perished, it would have killed Lady Barbara, my lord!"

Lord Champney looked at his servitor in an utter amazement.

"She grieved for me, then? She was anxious?"

"She was almost frantic, my lord!"

Lord Champney covered his face with his hand.

"Was she acting?" he thought. "Is she so double-faced as this? Was she making a show of grief, hoping in her heart I should be lost? Or can it be, under all her faults, after all her straying, she has preserved a love for me? There is some mystery here I cannot fathom! Those kisses last night—those tears!—I must see her! I must know!"

He uncovered his face.

"Rugg," he said, "go to the Lady Barbara and tell her I desire her presence."

"Yes, my lord," said the butler arising. "And there comes a fly! Mr. Wamer has come, my lord!"

"He has? Then you need not go to the Lady Barbara. I will see Mr. Wamer first!"

His lordship little knew what that decision, apparently so trifling, would cost him.

A few minutes later, Felix Wamer, all anxiety and excitement, hurried into his presence.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FOR a moment Dora, standing on the steps of the Coningsbys' house, was paralysed by the peril which had overtaken her.

Jack Narr, with his sinister smile of exultation, continued to stand before her, with arms outstretched, cutting off her retreat.

"Come on, Miss Dora!" he exclaimed, his manner half respectful, half menacing. "You needn't be afraid of me! I won't harm you! I've a cab waiting around the corner, and you shall go home like a lady!"

Dora looked round her like a frightened deer.

There was a slight movement about the door of the cab in which Mr. Weir awaited her. It seemed as if the young squire were about to alight.

Narr's glances followed hers.

"Your cab, eh?" he demanded. "I noticed it afore. The cabman can't help you, Miss Dora. You're booked to go home with me. Will you go peaceable, or shall we have a row? I can call a bobby, and say as how I'm your parent, and you're a runaway daughter, as has got set up above her kin by being 'dopted out! The law is on my side. Coming?"

He came up a step nearer to her.

At the same moment the young man stepped out of the cab upon the pavement, and turned his face toward her.

A sudden inspiration—it was quicker than thought—seized Dora.

With the rapidity of lightning she sprang down the steps, hurling Narr aside in her impetuous descent, and flew like a deer along the pavement towards the cab.

Narr recovered himself, and with a wild oath, sprang in pursuit.

The girl's superior lightness and fleetness won the day.

The young man, comprehending the situation, hurried to meet her, helped her into the cab, sprang in himself, and the vehicle rolled away, turning out of the square at the very moment that Narr came up to the spot where it had so long waited.

The man's anger and fury can be imagined. He heaped imprecations upon the heads of both Dora and her friend, swore to "have the law on them both," and fairly raved in his disappointment, spending several precious minutes thus vainly before it occurred to him to call his cab and hasten in pursuit.

When he had once conceived that idea, however, he hastened to put it into execution.

A few minutes thereafter he was hurrying in the wake of Dora and the young man, urging his cabman to make a desperate effort to overtake them.

Meanwhile Dora, pale and panting, leaned back in her vehicle, her hands trembling in the warm, reassuring clasp of Mr. Weir.

"Courage, Dora!" said the young man, reassuringly. "He cannot overtake us! See how fast we are going! Have faith in me. I will protect you, Dora. I will not let you go back to the Narra!"

A tremulous smile of gratitude, like a ray of sunlight, beamed from Dora's sorrowing young face. She drew a little nearer her lover.

"Oh, Noel!" she exclaimed piteously, "I have no friend now but you. He—Jack Narr—looked terrible to me as he stood there to intercept me; more terrible than a wild beast! I can have no home with him and his wife. And Miss Coningsby has refused to assist me in any way unless I return to—to them!" and she shuddered. "What shall I do, Noel?"

"The first thing to be done is to proceed to your new lodgings," replied Noel cheerfully. "Leave it all to me, Dora. I will look after your future, my little sister!"

He spoke the final words as if they cost him an effort. Dora blushed, then paled, and drew her hands from his, her sweet face gathering a deeper gravity and anxiety.

"Noel," she said, gravely, after a pause, during which she listened intently for the sound of pursuing wheels, failing to hear them, "you are very good to me—but I am not your sister! Miss Coningsby said it was improper for me to depend upon you for aid or counsel—"

"Would it be better for you to be friendless, Dora?" asked her lover, in a tender reproach. "I shall never forget the respect due to you, and to your isolation and trouble. But surely no one could find fault with you for accepting the simplest brotherly attentions from one who has known you from your earliest childhood—from one who was Mr. Chessom's intimate and trusted friend? As soon as I have seen you placed in safety, I will leave you; but not till then!"

"Can I not get a situation as a governess?" suggested Dora. "The papers are full of advertisements, some of which might apply to me. My wants are humble enough, Noel. I am willing to do any honest labour in any quiet position."

It trembled upon the young squire's tongue to ask her again to become his wife, and allow him to protect and care for her; but it seemed to his generous soul like taking advantage of her desolation and helplessness, and he was silent.

"Not yet," he said to himself. "I must wait until she has got over her disappointment about Felix Wamer. Perhaps her heart may turn to me yet. I must wait."

He sighed. Somehow such happiness in reserve seemed improbable.

In due time the cab arrived at the address Noel had given, and he assisted Dora to alight.

They found themselves in a quiet, respectable street, in that part of Notting Hill bordering on Kensington, and but a few minutes' walk from the Kensington Gardens.

"We are at a safe distance from Lowater Crescent—as safe as if we were at the other end of London," said Noel.

He swept a glance up and down the street to see if they had been closely pursued, and then conducted Dora up the steps of a quiet, red-brick house in the middle of the street, and sounded the knocker loudly.

A servant appearing, the young pair were ushered into a stuffy little parlour, and left for a few minutes to themselves.

"I think I'll dismiss the cab," said the young man, looking from the window. "I know that Narr pursued us, but I think he lost us somewhere in the crowd. Yet, to make all sure, I'll send our cab away, so that, should he come into this street, he will find no trace of us."

He hastened to do so, going out for the purpose.

When he returned, the landlady, Mrs. Dox, made her appearance.

She was a prim, severe-looking woman, a widow, and one of that innumerable class who "have seen better days." She wore a black dress and a widow's cap, and might have served as a model for a painter's incarnation of Respectability, she was so cold, so staid, and so severe.

Her countenance evinced her surprise at seeing the young man so accompanied. He had observed her window-card of "Apartments to Let" and had called that morning and engaged her drawing-room floor, consisting of two rooms, promising to take possession of them in the evening.

The landlady treated him coldly, glancing inquiringly at Dora.

"Your sister, Mr. Weir?" she asked.

"Not my sister, but a young lady from Sussex, the orphaned daughter of a late neighbour of mine," explained Noel. "I wish to resign my rooms in your house to her, Mrs. Dox."

The landlady's face hardened. She pursed up her mouth primly.

"I regret, Mr. Weir," she said, "that I cannot accommodate your friend. If you choose to give up your rooms, you are at liberty to do so, but you cannot let them to another!"

Dora put back her veil, and lifted her pale, pleading face to the gaze of the landlady.

That face, so pure, so childlike, so lovely, made an instant impression upon Mrs. Dox.

"If you refuse to receive me, madam, of course I must go," said the girl, in her sweet, troubled voice. "But first let me tell you how much I need such a shelter as this house would be."

"Yes, tell her, Dora," said Mr. Weir, beginning to fear that he should have to take his young charge to a hotel, and so expose her to the publicity from which she shrank.

Dora told her story, in her impetuous, girlish way. Before she had finished she had won the heart of the landlady; for there was a warm heart under all that buckram and armour of staid severity.

"You shall stay," said Mrs. Dox, her face kindling. "You shall have Mr. Weir's rooms, and I will watch over you myself. It would be too great a shame if you should be compelled to go back to these atrocious people. And I daresay I can find you some music scholars."

Dora's eyes glowed, and her face lighted up with a sudden splendour.

She caught the landlady's hand in hers, pressing it warmly.

"Poor young thing!" said Mrs. Dox, completely won now. "She's just like a babe in the wood, Mr. Weir. You can depend upon me, sir, to protect her."

Weir's look of gratitude considerably enlightened the landlady as to his state of feeling towards Dora. She comprehended that he was Dora's lover, and a sort of maternal feeling towards them both took possession of her heart.

Dora was taken upstairs and installed into her two rooms, a sitting-room and bed-chamber connecting. Both were airy, pleasant, and well-furnished, and there was an air of neatness about them not common to lodging-houses in general.

Dora made herself at home here at once, laying off her hat and sash, and inviting Noel and Mrs. Dox to be seated.

Both complied with the invitation.

"Pity Miss Chessom was obliged to leave her boxes!" observed the landlady compassionately. "Can't they be got, Mr. Weir?"

"No. They will have to be given up, at least for the present," replied the young man. "Miss Chessom will be obliged to purchase a new wardrobe. It will only endanger her liberty to go back to Low-water Crescent."

This view of the case was so evidently practical that Dora and Mrs. Dox resigned all thought of attempting to recover the abandoned effects of the former.

Presently Mrs. Dox withdrew for a few minutes, having a call below, and Noel arose to take his departure.

"You must send for me if you need me, Dora," he said, taking her hand. "I shall call, in any case, to-morrow."

"And by to-morrow I hope to be settled in my new home," replied Dora, smiling. "If Mrs. Dox can get me pupils in music, I shall not have longer need

to tax your friendship, Noel. But, however independent I may become, I shall never cease to be grateful to you for all your goodness to me."

Noel's handsome face became yet more grave. "Do not speak of gratitude to me, Dora," he said, gently. "And now, good-bye for to-day."

He lifted her hand to his lips with a chivalrous courtesy, and then went out from her presence, descending to the street.

Dora looked after him from her window, with a sweet, steady smile curving her lips, and with a bright glow in her dark eyes.

"I wonder if he will ever ask me that question again," she thought, blushing. "How foolish I was! I wonder if he wants my love now? Yet, if he were to ask me again I would not marry him. He would think I accepted him, not from love, but for a home. How noble and grand he is! And what a poor little fool I was to fling away the priceless gem for the worthless imitation!"

She drew a sobbing sigh, and the tears came and dimmed the bright glow of her eyes, and the sweet smile quivered, and became a pitiful sort of smile indeed.

The remainder of the day—it was now nearly dusk—and the evening, passed very drearily to Dora.

The next morning Mrs. Dox went out with the young girl, and procured for her two music pupils, and the hope of more.

In the afternoon Mr. Weir called, and was informed of Dora's successes, the young girl assuming a very pretty air of independence which quite enchanted her lover.

The young man had also some news to communicate. He had learned that Felix Warner had gone back to Norfolk, having been summoned by his relative, Lord Champney.

"So there's nothing to fear from him, Dora," he said. "Nor from the Narrs either. They will be quite unable to find you."

The thought was comforting, but it was scarcely true. Jack Narr had been duly instructed by Warner, and was likely to prove a formidable enemy in the end.

The young man made a long call, and went away, promising to return again on the morrow.

About an hour after his departure—toward dusk—when Mrs. Dox and Dora were in the midst of a discussion in the girl's room, a ring was heard, and presently the tramp of feet sounded on the stairs.

Dora rose to fly.

"It's some one to see the third pair back," said Mrs. Dox. "He's an artist, and his friends are noisy. Don't be afraid, miss."

At this juncture the door was burst open.

Dora uttered a cry of alarm.

At the same instant three persons came noisily into the room—Mrs. Narr, red and angry, her black bonnet bent awry, Jack Narr, also red-faced and jubilant, and a police officer, whose mental was greatly subordinate to his physical strength.

"Here she is!" cried Mrs. Narr, exultantly, pointing at the shrinking girl. "Here she is, sir, my own daughter, and the most ungrateful one that ever breathed! Oh, you viper!" she ejaculated, shaking her hand at Dora. "You ran away from me, did you? You upset your own pa on the stone steps, did you?"

"A pretty way you treated me, Miss Dora!" said Jack Narr. "If it hadn't been for flogging Mr. Weir, we'd never known where you was!"

"This is the young woman, then?" asked the policeman.

"Exactly!" said Narr, tilting himself on his toes and heels, in a state of blissful satisfaction.

"Do you deny that these people are your parents, my dear?" asked the officer.

"No—but—"

"That'll do! Put your bunnet on, and go long of your mother!" commanded the policeman, with an air of authority, determined to earn the golden sovereign Mrs. Narr had promised him for his services on the occasion. "No words, miss! 'Long with you! The law gives the parent control of the child till she's of age. Will you go, or shall I take you afore a magistrate?"

Complaint and protestation were alike useless. Mrs. Dox dared not resist a policeman in uniform, and fell to weeping bitterly, and wishing that Mr. Weir were there.

And Dora—poor, helpless Dora! She was like a bird in the snare. She sat down, half stunned by this terrible reverse, and Mrs. Narr tied on her hat and put on her sash.

Then Jack Narr helped her downstairs, put her into a cab which was waiting, dismissed the stout policeman, and the cab drove away, with Dora seated between her two exulting enemies!

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

A NEW METHOD OF PURIFYING WATER.—Runge has made some observations on the purification of water, which offer some interesting points. Briefly put, his assertion is that metallic iron offers the readiest and simplest means of disinfecting water, and of preserving it fresh. With his explanation we shall not now trouble ourselves, but we may say he accounts for the fact that Thames water taken to sea in iron tanks soon becomes perfectly sweet, and remains so through a long voyage. One observation he has made may be of interest to many readers at this time of the year. It is that a small piece of sheet iron or some nails placed in the water in which cut flowers are put will keep the water sweet, and we may suppose the flowers fresh, for a long time. Runge also put some iron filings in a vessel with a very small quantity of water, and placed a leech therein, and found the water quite fresh and the leech healthy after six months had passed.

PLUNGING FIRE.—An extremely satisfactory result, as far as the navy are concerned, was lately obtained at Shoeburyness. A target representing a portion of the deck of an ironclad ship, protected by 1-inch iron plates, was fired at by the 9-inch muzzle-loading rifle gun, the projectile being Palliser shell, the charge the full battering one of 43lb., and the distance 100 yards. The target was so arranged that the projectile struck at an angle of incidence of a shot fired direct at about 200 yards, or that of a projectile fired at 100 yards from a higher level; such, for instance, as that of the Monarch's battery as compared with the Captain's. It was found that at this angle the projectile did not enter the ship, but, after plunging up the woodwork of the deck, ricocheted off it, and went away screaming and whistling up into the air until lost from sight. One of the disadvantages urged against a low freeboard is thus disposed of as far as the 9-inch guns are concerned. The Monarch, however, is armed with 12-inch guns, and it would be interesting to ascertain whether the above results would hold good in the case of the larger calibre. It seems desirable also to ascertain the actual angle at which a projectile fired horizontally will penetrate a ship's deck protected with as much iron as is admissible in its construction. Ship's decks may often be subjected to a plunging fire from elevated batteries, such as those on Stradoun Heights or Gibraltar.

ETHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

A SPECIAL meeting of this society was held at the Royal United Service Institution on the 21st June, Professor Huxley, LL.D., F.R.S., President, in the chair. Colonel Lane Fox made some remarks on the Dorchester Dykes and Siodun Hill, to which attention has recently been directed, and showed that the works are British and not Roman. He stated that the demolition of these works has been arrested for the present. Mr. David Forbes, F.R.S., read a paper "On the Aymara Indians of Bolivia and Peru." He described them as a small, massive, thick-set race, with large heads and short limbs. The trunk is enormously large, and the thorax extremely capacious, being adapted to meet the requirements of respiration in a rarefied atmosphere, as the Aymara lives at an altitude of from 8,000 to 16,000ft. above the sea-level. The proportions of the lower limbs are curious, the thigh being shorter than the leg; the heel is inconspicuous. In colour the Aymara varies from copper-red to yellowish-brown and blackish-brown, according to the elevation at which he lives. Many of the customs of the Aymaras depend on their conditions of life. In consequence of the low boiling point of water at such great altitudes, beans are rarely used, and the food consists chiefly of potatoes peculiarly prepared. Clay is added to the food, not for any nutritious matter in it, but merely to increase the bulk of the meal. In religion the Aymaras are nominally Christians. They appear to have no system of writing.

The discussion on this communication was supported by the President, Mr. E. G. Squier, Mr. Cull, Mr. Dendy, Mr. Bollaert, Mr. Harrison, and Mr. C. Markham.

At the same meeting Dr. A. Campbell exhibited tracings of certain rock-descriptions from British Guiana, and the Hon. E. G. Squier displayed a large collection of drawings, photographs, &c., from Peru.

A GREAT meeting was recently held at the Mansion House in favour of the movement for completing St. Paul's Cathedral. The Prime Minister, the Bishop of London, and other distinguished men were present. The Lord Mayor presided. Mr. Gladstone spoke in favour of completion. 25,000l. had, previous to the meeting been promised, and large additions were afterwards made. 250,000l. is required.



[WILLIAM I., KING OF PRUSSIA.]

THE KING OF PRUSSIA.

In the great war which has so unhappily for the interests of the civilised world broken out in Europe, there are two men who stand out in bold—we had almost written bad—pre-eminence—William I., the King of Prussia, and Napoleon III., Emperor of the French. Around these two centres the deepest interest of the deadly conflict; the first, as having provoked the war, and the latter as having declared it; and both having prepared the way for and commenced hostilities from purely dynastic, if not personal motives.

The guilt of bloodshed lies, therefore, pretty equally upon both their heads, though if there be any difference, the preponderance of guiltiness lies with the Prussian king; for this war with France is but in reality a sequel to that which he inflicted upon Denmark a few years since—and that that was a deeply criminal war, caused by the ambition of Prussia and her king, no one has been able to deny. The success of that raid upon a gallant but comparatively powerless people, the subsequent victory over Austria, and the subjugation and absorption of the minor states of Southern Germany, would seem to have puffed up both the king and people of Prussia with a kind of warlike intoxication, and to have inspired the settled resolve to add yet more territory to the Prussian limits, and strip the old German appanages of Alsace and Lorraine from France. To this end has Prussia been for the past few years pushing on night and day her armaments and perfecting her military organisation.

It was not possible that so astute a ruler as Napoleon III. should be blind to the ulterior designs of Prussia, and with a view to this eventuality, France also vigorously prepared her armaments. The knowledge that these two great nations, long rivals, and with a long list of victories and defeats between them, were thus arming and preparing for

some future struggle for the military supremacy over the Continent filled the other nations of Europe with such undefined apprehensions that every country, more or less, followed their example, increasing or modifying their warlike resources. The air grew consequently thick with rumours of war, the political atmosphere becoming, like that of the natural world before a storm, so overcharged with electricity that an outburst might happen at any moment. It has come at last; the storm of war has broken; and two of the most powerful nations of the world, two of the most intellectual and civilised peoples of Europe, are devoting all their energies and all their skill to the infliction of death, and ruin, and desolation upon each other. Some "little Peterkin" of the future will doubtless ask some aged and crippled Caspar to tell him what was the cause of conflict; but he will surely receive the answer, "I cannot tell," which was given by his poetical prototype to a similar inquiry. We ourselves, indeed, can hardly tell. The cause assigned, it is true, has been the desire of the King of Prussia to place a Prussian prince—Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen—upon the throne of Spain, in despite of the Emperor Napoleon III.; King William well knowing that a Prusso-Spanish king would be a mere puppet of the Prussian monarch, and calculating, doubtless, that the mere nomination of such a prince would excite the French ruler and people to the desired point of warlike resistance. It has done so; and Prussia and France are once more in the field, to settle their ancient rivalry, and by the terrible arbitrament of war decide whether Napoleon III. or William I. shall be the military ruler of Continental Europe.

William I., King of Prussia, son of Frederick William III. and of Princess Louise of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, and brother to the late king, born March 22, 1797, was educated as a soldier, and took part in the campaigns of 1813 and 1815 against France. In 1840 he was appointed Governor of Pomerania.

At an early age he held till the revolution of 1848 broke out, when he took refuge in England. He was elected a member of the Constituent Assembly in May, 1848, returned to Berlin, and took his seat in the Assembly June 8, 1848, and was made Commander-in-Chief of the Prussian army acting against the revolutionary forces of Baden in June, 1849. When the mind of his brother gave way, in 1858, the Prince was created Regent, and he immediately dismissed the Kreuz or aristocratic party, and adopted a liberal policy. His brother, Frederick William IV., dying without issue January 2, 1861, he succeeded, under the title of William I., to the crown, which he placed upon his own head at Königsberg, October 18, by which action he emphatically asserted the doctrine of the "right divine of kings." The course of policy he has pursued since he became king has disappointed the hopes that were formed regarding him. No sooner was he seated on the throne than he began a contest with the Chamber of Deputies, which gradually became more critical, until, after Count-Bismarck-Schöenhausen had been appointed his Prime Minister, in 1862, the feud threatened to end in revolution or civil war. Fortunately for him and his ministerial advisers, the aggressive war on Denmark waged by Prussia and Austria diverted the attention of the Prussian people from home affairs for a time; and, since the close of that war of aggression the king has proved a pliant tool in the hands of his prime minister.

Following his counsels he embarked on a still more ambitious scheme, and prepared to obtain supremacy in Germany by force of arms. For many years military preparations had been made, and early in 1866 the scheme was ripe for execution. A treaty of alliance was concluded with Italy, an ultimatum was forwarded to the smaller states in the north of Germany, and an immense army was set in motion. War was declared against Austria June 17; and, after a short campaign, in which William I. and the royal princes took part, Austria was compelled to make a humiliating peace. The terrible effects of the needle gun created quite a panic in the Austrian army, and her generals found it would be useless to prolong the struggle. In spite of this triumph, the rule of William I. and of his despotic minister is by no means popular, and the German people do not find in this despotism the least approach to their dreams of a free and united fatherland. William I. married June 11, 1829, the Princess Augusta, daughter of Charles-Frederick, Grand-Duke of Weimar. They have two children—Prince Frederick-William born October 18, 1831, who married January 25, 1858, Victoria Adelaide, Princess Royal of Great Britain, by whom he has four children—Frederick William-Victor Albert, born January 27, 1859; Victoria-Elizabeth Augusta Charlotte, born July 24, 1860; Albert-William Henry, born August 20, 1862; and Frederica Amelia Wilhelmina Victoria, born April 12, 1866—and the Princess Louise-Mary, born December 8, 1838; married September 20, 1856, to Frederick-William, Grand-Duke of Baden.

It is rather singular that King William I., whose biography we have given above, should have fought against the armies of the first Napoleon in that war of the Titans which ended at Waterloo, and live to direct the whole military power of Germany against the legions of Napoleon III. The Prussian monarch has attained to more than the allotted threescore years and ten; and if his life has not been quite like that of Goethe's hero, Wallenstein, "a battle and a march," it has been sufficiently turbulent and warlike, and seen not a little violence and bloodshed; and remembering the iniquitous spoliation of Denmark, and the overbearing ambition which laid plans for, and the haughtiness of temper which has brought about this present European calamity, we cannot but regard with something like a shudder the confident appeal which he has addressed to Heaven to bless his armies with victory. Such appeals are nothing less than impious.

Both sovereigns have hastened to place before the world some explanation or colourable reason for waging a devastating war in the heart of Europe; but, as the world has judged for itself, there has been no sufficient *casus belli*; and the bloodguiltiness of it will, we repeat, be assigned to them in nearly equal proportions—no less by their contemporaries than by posterity. On behalf of the Emperor of the French, it is, however, solemnly asserted that he desired peace, and was the last man to abandon hopes of maintaining it. It would be futile to attempt to forecast the result of the struggle to which the two greatest military powers of the Continent are now committed. The only thing certain is that a terrible carnage must ensue, and that the conflict will be obstinate, and in all probability protracted. Two millions of armed men, divided in nearly equal proportions between the two countries, can be brought into the field; and not until these shall have been at least decimated, whether by mitrailleuse, chasseur, or the needle-gun, and exhaustion shall supervene, is either power likely to stipulate for terms of peace.



STRANGELY MARRIED.

BY ERNEST BRENT,

Author of "Strayed Away," "Milly Lee," "John Kendrake's Destiny," &c.

CHAPTER XXV.

May, come no nearer.
Misunderstand me not! Be not deceived;
The love wherewith I love you is not such
As you would offer me. *The Spanish Student.*

WHEN May Lenmore went homeward, after her interview with Fred, she met her brother Will, who had gone to look for her. He was more than usually grave. It was so rare that his ever cheerful disposition went to gaiety or despondency, that for those who knew him it was a cause for wonderment to see him change one way or the other.

"There's that Carlow with father again," he grumbled; "and they have been asking for you. It strikes me that I shall turn the fellow out one of these days; giving himself airs as if the place belonged to him. I wish John was at home."

"Isn't he?"
"Never. Of course he's up at the Lodge, along with Mr. Dacre and Lizzie. I suppose I may call her Lizzie, as she will be John's wife soon."

"And even if she were not; we are such old friends."
"Where have you been?" Will asked, presently.
"You went out two hours ago, or more. Did you go to see any one?"

"No, Will."
"Not that I am sorry you were out," said Mr. Lenmore's eldest son. "I hate to see that old legal reprobate of a Carlow gazing at you with his eyes. He goes so far as to make jokes now, and call father old boy. I know I shall horsewhip him."

"I wish father would not have him at our house so frequently," said May. "We have not been the better for his coming."

"Worse—much worse; and I know it's worse than I think, because John looks so serious over it. We had better go in, as father wishes it."

"I would rather stay out till Mr. Carlow is gone."
"So would I; but he will stay till midnight if we don't go back."

"I have something to tell you, Will, before we go in," said May, with such an air of mystery, that her brother began to feel like a conspirator. "A great—very—very great secret."

"A very—very great secret?" said Will, looking at her with his big brown eyes opened very wide. "I wonder what it is!"

[DISCOVERY AND RECOVERY.]

"You will not tell any one?"
"No!" said Will, solemnly; "I won't."
"Not even John?"
"Not even John! Well, I should like to tell John. I like to tell John everything."

"You must not tell him this, Will. It's a great secret that you, and I, and Mildred Dacre are to have all to ourselves."

"I don't mind so much if Mildred is to be in it," said Will. "And now, what is it about, May?"
"I have just seen an old friend—a dear old friend."

Will Lenmore tried to think who the dear old friend could be, but could think of no one in connection with a secret.

"I don't know any dear old friend," he said, shaking his head.

"One who has been a long journey."

"Don't know any one who went a long journey."
"Fred!" whispered May, unable to keep the secret from him any longer. "He has come back, but he is in such trouble, Will; and in danger as well. No one except you, and Mildred, and me is to know that he is here."

"How can that be?"
"I do not know, and he cannot tell me, but we are to meet him to-morrow evening at the oak triangle, and perhaps we shall hear more."

"Is it not very strange," said Will, "that Fred should come back in that way, and never go to see his friends? I think we ought to tell John, and see what he would think of it."

May dissuaded him from that. Her sensitive love was on the alert, and she guarded Fred even from the shadow of a possible danger.

"Let us do as Fred wishes," she said. "He knows best what is best for his own safety, and if we do anything he does not tell us to do, we may be helping to get him into trouble. Don't you see now, Will, dear?"

William Lenmore did see when it was put to him in that way.

"What does he want to see Mildred for?" he asked, struck suddenly by an afterthought. He remembered that, in the old time, Mildred had been very fond of Fred, and the question he now asked was prompted by a little sense of jealousy.

"Because he can trust her," said May, who understood the feeling that made him speak so dubiously. "He is going to leave England, and he would like to see some of the old faces before he goes."

"Poor old Fred! I wonder what he has been doing. Nothing wrong, I hope."

"Fred could do nothing wrong," said May, with a woman's faith in the object of her affection. "Will you go to Mildred to-morrow and tell her to come with us, or shall I?"

"I will." Mr. Lenmore's son was glad of any pretext that gave him a faint opportunity of going to see Miss Dacre. "Poor old Fred! How does he look?"

"Very worn, and thin, and haggard; much older, too, than when he went away. I am afraid he has been in sad trouble."

They had arrived at the farm by this time. Mr. Lenmore and the lawyer were seated together in close conversation when they entered, but it ceased with suspicious suddenness, and Carlow rose with studied politeness to offer her a seat. Will misunderstood him with perfect simplicity, and took the seat for himself.

There were no ties of sympathy between Will and the legal gentleman. Carlow thought Will a good-natured simpleton, and Will had no doubt whatever that the lawyer was of very doubtful integrity. Neither took much pains to hide his opinion of the other.

There was a restraint evident in Mr. Lenmore's manner to-night. When he spoke to his daughter his voice was low and affectionate, but he seemed to avoid her gaze. It was clear to her that he was struggling with some purpose that gave him cause for uneasiness or shame.

William Lenmore seated himself in such a position that his broad back and shoulders were the only objects which presented themselves to Mr. Carlow's eyes when Mr. Carlow looked at, or tried to look at, May. Will asked May to give him another lesson in chess, and chess, just now, was with him a very solemn study indeed.

But his fineness was thrown away on this occasion. The lawyer and Mr. Lenmore had been talking of a subject that was serious to one of them. Very much can be said without a word being spoken in direct allusion to the subject itself.

"When that game is over, I want a few words with you," said Mr. Lenmore to Will.

"Very well, father."

But he did not hurry over the play. He was shrewd enough to suspect that the few words were merely a pretext to get him out of the way, and give the lawyer an opportunity of seeing May alone.

To Mr. Carlow it seemed as if that game would never end, though May, as a rule, could dispose of her brother in a very few minutes, and gain an easy victory. But to-night Will played very slowly and very carefully, and Mr. Lenmore was getting impa-

tient, when Will swept defective knights and vanquished bishops in a heap on one end of the board, and rose to attend his father.

"Carlow has something to say to May," said the master of Glen Farm, when he was outside with his son; "something that we have been talking over this evening. I don't think you like him much, do you?"

"No," was the blunt reply. "I never did."
"I did not at first, Will, my boy; but I understand him better now. He is a very good fellow, and he has been of great help to me. He is rich, too."

"So are many like him, father," said Will, drily, "with other people's money."

"You must learn to like him better," observed the elder Lenmore, gravely. "I want a little help just now, and he is the man to give it me. He is fond of May."

"Old enough to be her father."
"So much the better. Very young men do not make good husbands. Carlow is a man of experience and position. He knows his own mind, and is not likely to change."

"Not if he depends on May," said Will; "and I know if John has any voice in the matter, old Carlow won't come off very well. It does seem strange to me, father, that you should pick out such a man as that for our May."

"Well, well," said Mr. Lenmore, in a troubled tone, "we will let things go on as they best can. May shall choose for herself, but I hope she won't refuse him."

There was some trouble behind this, Will was sure. It pained him to see his father, whom he had always looked upon as a model of a steady, independent country gentleman, so anxious to please such a man as Carlow. But he said nothing.

"If the worst comes to the worst," thought the young yeoman, "I can put my hand to the plough, and help father till better times come, only it will fall heavily, rather heavily on John. He won't be able to marry Miss Amory if he has to keep home down here."

The true-hearted fellow was more concerned for his brother's sake than his own. He was too unselfish to see that, in the event of his father falling into difficulties, his own position would be worse than John's.

Mr. Carlow did not feel entirely at ease when left alone with May Lenmore. She was, in fact, the more self-possessed of the two, and his first observation made her smile. Had he been a shy school-boy, instead of a man of the world, he could not have gone more awkwardly into generalities about the weather and such other hopeless topics as are sure to suggest themselves when a man wishes to be in earnest.

"You have been a great many years in this neighbourhood?" said Mr. Carlow, intending to say something totally different, and failing at the outset.

"Yes, Mr. Carlow. I was born here."
He would have told her that he remembered the occasion, but it occurred to him that such a remark would not be a good prelude to a proposal of marriage.

"Your father and I are very old friends," he went on, "though it's only lately we've grown very intimate. Still, it is better late than never."

Having delivered himself of that highly original observation, Mr. Carlow smiled and looked absently out of window. Gaining no inspiration from the view, he looked again at the sweet and placid face of the girl, and was uncomfortably impressed by the idea that he had never shone to so little advantage as at present.

"Mr. Lenmore and I were speaking of you this evening," he said, "on a subject that is of the utmost importance to me."

"Were you, indeed?" said May, with innocent surprise, as if she could by no possibility conceive how any subject that was of the utmost importance to him could concern her.

"Yes, I am not an old man, Miss Lenmore, though I admit that there is some disparity in our ages. Still I ventured to hope that you would weigh my proposition, which I make with your father's full approbation."

"What proposition, Mr. Carlow?"

"I want you to be my wife, Miss Lenmore. I find that I love you, though I thought I had done with such a feeling for ever. I am saying this after deep and serious consideration, and if I am not eloquent, I am at least sincere. I confess I have had no practice in declarations of this kind, and when I tell you that I love you better than I ever thought it possible to love, you may believe me, every word."

May was quite silent after her first glance of astonishment. The offer was not entirely unexpected, but, nevertheless, it surprised her when it came.

He thought that she was reflecting, and hastened to strengthen his position by throwing in the weight of his worldly advantages.

"I can give you a handsome settlement," he added, "and I will spare no trouble or expense to gratify your wishes. I am a rich man, as you are aware."

"One would think he was making a legal bargain for me," thought May. "I wonder if all lawyers speak in that dreadfully matter-of-fact way when they fancy themselves in love!"

"I am waiting for your answer, Miss Lenmore. If I have any other consideration to offer, it is that your acceptance of my proposal will place me in a position that will give me the right to offer your father some assistance, of which he is just now in urgent need."

The last few words altered the nature of May's reply. If this man had her father in his power, it would be better to temporise with him than reject him altogether. She would gain time until she knew the truth.

"I am so surprised, Mr. Carlow," she said. "I had not expected anything of the kind from you."

"I am not a very demonstrative man, Miss Lenmore, but if I failed to give evidence of my feeling, it was not from want of earnestness. I do not want you to give me an immediate reply. It would be better, perhaps, if you begin to think of me in my new position—that of a suitor. I shall wait very patiently if you will let me hope."

The quieter and more sensible tone made May begin to respect him, but even had she not been so fervently in love with Frederick Amory, she felt Mr. Carlow was the last man she could ever care for. They had not one feeling in common, not even the sympathy of youth. She did not even like him as a friend.

"I should like to think well over it before I say a word in reply," she said. "It is a serious thing to consider. I must speak to my father and my brothers."

"Unhappily, I am not a favourite with either," he said; "and I would rather trust to your own unbiased decision. Will you take me on probation, and see what opinion you form of me as you learn to know me better?"

"I had rather you came merely as a friend at present. I should not like to give you any encouragement, and then disappoint you."

"You speak so fairly, and permit me to say, so sensibly," he said, "that if I were to fail to win you, I should regret my loss the more."

He lifted her hand to his lips with an air that was not deficient in grace, and May went from the room glad that the interview was over. She could see in her clear-headed way, that the man would have made a very safe and satisfactory sort of husband for a woman ten years her senior. It is the peculiarity of middle-aged vanity that it never thinks itself too old for the youngest and fairest of women.

"There is not a spark of feeling for me as yet," he said to himself, as the door closed, "and perhaps there never will be; but I do not care so that she marries me. Love is nothing more than habit, I believe. Husbands and wives are happy or contented, because they wear out the sentiment and grow accustomed to each other. The rest is rubbish."

It was easy for a man of such a very materialistic mind to be satisfied. If he won the young and beautiful girl for whom he cared it mattered very little whether she cared for him or not; he applied a practical legal dictum to matrimony, as to all other things—possession was nine points of the law. So that he had May to take the head of his table and be his companion, she might dream her old dreams, and think of old lovers to eternity.

"Well," said Mr. Lenmore, as he re-entered the room in which the conversation had just taken place, "what does my daughter say?"

"She will think over it. Your daughter is a very sensible girl, Lenmore; pretty, too; and I would rather take her to church to-morrow than make ten thousand pounds in one day."

"I am glad she behaved sensibly," said Lenmore, much relieved. "I was afraid her brother would spoil her, perhaps."

"No," said Carlow, as if they were discussing a mere business arrangement. "I think we may consider it done; and I don't care how soon."

Half-an-hour later they were talking of other things—shares and mining speculations, chiefly; and the wine was going freely—more freely than William Lenmore cared to see; for it was a habit his father had not indulged in before.

The next day May sent a note to Mildred by her brother Will. She thought it best not to intrust the telling of the secret to him, but preferred to keep the meeting with Fred as a pleasant surprise to Miss Dacre.

"If you can come for a walk with Will and me this evening," May wrote, "you shall see a very, very dear old friend. I will tell you by and bye, and do you know, Mildred dear, I have so much to say. What do you think of an offer of marriage, and from no less a personage than the rich attorney,

Mr. Carlow? Such an odious man, and yet I hardly dare refuse him. Don't be late."

The letter mystified Mildred; but, unlike Will, she did not puzzle herself with useless conjectures, nor did she question May's messenger. May had instructed Will not to tell, and he kept faith, though he was filled with a most intense desire to divulge.

"An offer of marriage from Mr. Carlow!" thought Mildred, "and she hardly dare refuse him. Why, I have heard my father speak of him in very severe terms, and I know he cannot be a good man. What can she mean by saying that she hardly dare refuse him?"

That question, like the others, she had to leave till she saw May in the evening, and then the two girls had a long conversation on the subject Mildred pitted her friend when she heard all.

"You must not let anything influence you in that way," Miss Dacre said, as they started for their walk, William Lenmore keeping behind them with very much of the grave and watchful docility that characterised the big dog who went with him everywhere. "You cannot care for him."

"Not with the very faintest feeling of regard," was the reply.

"If your father has plunged himself into debt or difficulty," Mildred went on, "he surely would not wish you to marry so that he might borrow money of your husband—place himself under obligations to such a man. Neither of your brothers would sanction it, I am sure."

"Yet father seemed pleased when Mr. Carlow told him that I had not given a decided answer."

"Don't marry him," said Mildred, earnestly. "It must be very terrible to be tied for life to a man you cannot even respect. You might learn to care for someone else even afterwards."

The sigh from May, that followed her words, suggested that there was no occasion for the someone to come afterwards.

"Who is the old friend we are going to see?" Mildred asked. "Tell me dear. I should not like to be embarrassed by too great a surprise."

May would not keep her in suspense, the time had been when she feared that Fred cared as much for Mildred, as May was sure, Mildred cared for him but that time was gone now.

"It is Fred," she said, lowly.

"Fred!"
"Lizzie's brother, Fred Amory, and no one is to know that he has come back, or something terrible will happen to him."

Miss Dacre put her left hand to her heart, and would have spoken, but her voice failed for a few moments. She had never given to another the place that the handsome bright-eyed boy had held in her memory.

"He was looking at the old place, when we met," said May, "and I did not know him at first."

"So he has changed?"
"Changed, so much that I or you would have passed him anywhere for a stranger."

Mildred's tender smile said No to that. True love, such love as hers, never can or does forget.

Having gone so far, it was but natural that May should tell the rest, and she did so with the impulsive joy of a girl who can confide the secret of her deepest happiness to a sympathetic listener.

"I did not know he was so fond of me till we met this time," said May. "I feel that I could go with him to the end of the world."

"Did he tell you then that he loved you?"

"Yes, many times!" and she went with girlish delight over the tender details, little thinking that every word was helping to fill her friend with silent pain. May was too happy to notice how grave and wistful the quiet face had grown.

Mildred heard the truth, and her strong and patient nature enabled her to control any display of emotion. She was sorry for herself, not envious of May; nor did she blame Fred. They were reared together, and it was easy for him to mistake her affection for a purely friendly regard.

"There's someone out shooting," said Will, as two reports followed in quick succession, "and I don't know who it can be. On the Dacre's ground too. Must be a stranger."

The tall trees of the oak triangle rose before them and a walk of less than three minutes took them to the appointed place of meeting. May and Mildred looked in vain for the bearded man May had described, but the dog ran forward and began to bay at something that lay in the shadow.

"Toby has found something," said Will, striding up. "What is it, old fellow?"

He stooped, and recoiled with a cry. He motioned the girls back, but it was too late. The starlight came down very solemnly through the oak-leaves, and the low boughs swung over the faces of two men lying side by side, both apparently dead.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Why do I walk abroad

By daylight, when the very sunshine mocks me,
And voices and familiar sounds cry, "Hide yourself!"
Longfellow.

In the moment which followed the first glimpse of that sombre sight there was a strange stillness. William Lenmore did not speak, but put out his hand to keep the girls away; Mildred passed him, and knelt by the fallen men. Her thrilling whisper made Will's heart tremble as she said:

"It's Fred!"

Never had there been so much unutterable agony condensed in two short words.

May had not so much self-control. She hid her face on her brother's breast and uttered shriek after shriek. He could not quiet her, though he tried, and her cries brought two gentlemen to the spot.

They were John Lenmore and Mr. Falcon.

"Something the matter here?" said the latter, calmly. "My colonial friend, I think, Mr. Lenmore. But who is the other?"

No one spoke. The detective knelt and looked closely at both. He put his hand on Harperley's breast; there was not the faintest motion.

"Dead!" he said, laconically. "One of you gentlemen had better take those ladies away. I shall be glad if you, Mr. John Lenmore, will stay with me."

May had fainted. Will lifted her in his arms and carried her some distance from the spot. Mildred would not move; she had torn off Fred's necktie and collar, opened his waistcoat and shirt, and was rubbing his bare chest; pulsation of the heart had not quite ceased.

"Does she know him?" whispered the detective.

John Lenmore inclined his head in grave assent.

"Yes; you may as well know the truth; that is the Frederick Amory of whom you have heard."

Falcon looked as though that information had thrown a new light on the matter, but he said nothing. While John Lenmore and Miss Dacre persevered in the attempt to restore Fred, he made a careful examination of Mr. Harperley's pockets; everything that he took out he replaced exactly as he found it.

"The cheque is here still," he said, calmly; "but the pocket-book is gone. Is it in your friend's possession?"

"No," said John, after searching; "it is not. And now, Mildred, let me ask you to leave Fred to us. Will must go for assistance, and May requires your attention."

He kissed her tenderly in that moment of their trial, and led her towards May. She obeyed the influence of his calm and strong directing hand, knowing that he would do all things for the best.

"Will," he said to his brother, whom the shock seemed to have stupefied, "you must go for help. Bring some of our own men to take Fred to the farm; send some one to tell the police that a stranger lies here dead; they had better remove him, and lose no time."

Will nodded, grasped his hand, and went away with the stride of a giant. John returned to the detective, who was examining the revolver. John watched him in silence.

"Look here," said Falcon; "you see there are two wounds in the body of our colonial friend?"

"Yes."

"Well, they were not done with this. It is the same weapon that I soaked two hours ago, and here it is with the damp charges still in it; everyone of them."

John Lenmore looked at him, and then at Fred, in grave reflection. The detective could read his thoughts. The case must be made public, and the evidence that would come could not fail to seriously implicate Lizzie's brother.

"Here is a flask of brandy," said Falcon, who had found a large one amongst Mr. Harperley's possessions, and was prepared to use it without repugnance; "it will help your friend to revive, and we had better hear something from him before strangers come."

John Lenmore took the significance of the remark, and applied the restorative to Fred. It was effectual; for after the lapse of a minute or two he opened his eyes with a dull, stunned gaze.

"John," he said, recognising the kind and thoughtful face, "is that you?"

"Yes, Fred; and tell me, in Heaven's name, how you came here?"

Amory began to recollect. He turned and looked at the dabbled figure beside him. He shuddered and put his hand to his forehead. It had bled, or the wound would have been more dangerous. As it was a large dark bruise told the nature of the blow.

"Is that poor fellow quite dead?" he asked.

"Quite."

Mr. Falcon listened attentively.

"I thought so," said Fred; "the last shot was too well aimed. You will not let him escape! Ah, John, I have wronged you so bitterly, but he, at least shall not triumph. You shall know everything."

"I know too much already, Fred," said John Lenmore, with quiet sadness. "I hope there is not more and worse to come."

Fred pressed his hands to his head. It ached terribly.

"Tell me how you came here and what happened," urged John. "We will help you in the worst extremity even; but lose no time."

"That's it," said the placid Mr. Falcon. "Time's everything just now, and the sooner you put some distance between yourself and Thorpendean, the better it may be for you. Not that our colonial friend is a great loss to society, but certain legal gentlemen might take objections to the manner of getting rid of him. It was unwise, too; he was walking beautifully into our hands."

"Who is that man?" asked Fred, with a touch of his old hauteur, "and what does he mean?"

"He is a friend of mine. Well, Fred, now let us hear the truth, and soon, for I fancy I hear footsteps. How did this happen?"

"I only saw the last of it. I came here to meet your sister May, and she promised to bring Will and Mildred. I did not ask for you. I felt that I could not look you in the face."

"Go on."

"When I was near, I saw this poor fellow and Paul Dalrymple lying on the grass smoking, and apparently on the best of terms. I could not hear what was said at first, but presently Dalrymple shot the other down; at least he staggered."

"Then?"

"Dalrymple asked him to yield up something, in a tone that meant murder. The other would not, though badly wounded, and drew his knife. Dalrymple fired again, and the man fell dead. His murderer had taken something from his pocket, when I appeared, and accused him. He felled me with the butt of that revolver, and I went down senseless. It seems hours ago to me."

Fred had risen to his feet, and he leaned on John while speaking; he spoke hurriedly—like one who felt faint, and feared he would not have time to finish what he wanted to say.

"Don't give way to sorrow, Mr. Amory," said Falcon; "try a little more of this, and let us move on."

The unfortunate young man drank again, and tried to stand more firmly. It was evident that the blow had affected him more seriously than was at first supposed.

"Are you better now?"

"I think so."

"Try to keep up," urged Falcon. "Did you ever see this man before?"

"I seem to remember him, but very dimly."

"Did you speak to him?"

"Never in my life, to my knowledge."

"Yes, you have," said Falcon, quietly. "He kept a liquor shanty on the Pentolina, and his object in coming over here was to give Mr. Paul Dalrymple some information respecting Mr. Bryant. I tell you this, that you may know how to act. If you think Thorpendean is not the safest place for you, why, leave it, and I will never look to see which way you go."

"I do not understand."

Mildred had by this time succeeded in restoring May to consciousness, and now she approached with him. Falcon was not overweighted with emotion, but when he saw May Lenmore take both Fred's hands, and look at him, her face wistful with the pity and the love in it, his imperturbability underwent a strain.

They had not gone a hundred yards, when the local constabulary—a force of three, including an inspector—made their way towards the scene of the tragedy. With them were a straggling score of villagers, who had picked up some desultory intelligence that something had taken place. Will went up to his brother John.

"I have answered no questions," he said, in a low tone. "I thought I had better leave everything to you."

"You were right."

Men do not say much in times of trouble. The real necessities are thought and action.

Mr. Falcon took care of the local inspector. The latter was burdened by a sense of professional importance, and a feeling of total incapacity to deal with so grave a case. Never within the memory of the oldest inhabitant had such a deed been done in the vicinity of Thorpendean.

"I believe, sir, that you were one of the first on the spot," said the inspector to Falcon.

"Yes."

"Was the unfortunate man dead then?"

"We may as well defer these questions to the coroner," smiled Falcon, amused by the inspector's desire to be dignified and official in the presence of the villagers. "There is sure to be an inquest."

"Just so, sir; but I heard there were two."

"There was a gentleman found by the dead man's side," said Falcon, deliberately, "but he is not in a position to relate what happened yet."

"I see him with Mr. Lenmore. Is he a stranger here?"

"No; he is Mr. Frederick Amory, stepson to Mr. Dacre, of the Lodge."

That piece of information considerably increased the inspector's respect, and he at once set it down in his own mind that the dead man had set upon Mr. Amory to plunder him, and been slain in self-defence; in which case the inspector was perfectly ready to set it down as justifiable homicide, and do Mr. Amory honour.

The man upon whom fate had fallen so swiftly and so fatally was carried away from the spot to await the inquest, and Fred was taken to the farm. He was very low and despondent; the kindness of his friends had little effect upon him; he seemed to like to be quiet—his head pillowed on May Lenmore's shoulder, her hand locked in his. She did not seem to disguise her love, now that he was in pain.

That quietude was not a good sign. He was in a state of fever by the morning, and they had to send for a physician. There were many anxious hearts waiting for that gentleman's verdict.

"He is in considerable danger, but not past hope," the physician said; "he must not be moved from here."

May was grateful in her soul for that.

"He must not be questioned concerning the events of to-night," the physician went on. "He has evidently been enduring great mental and physical fatigue for a long time. The blow he received has seriously affected him, and any shade of trouble at present would result in a permanent affliction. Now you will know how to act. I have spoken plainly, because the case must not be trifled with."

"But should his evidence be required at the inquest on the murdered man?" suggested John.

"It may be taken down in writing, gathered from him with as little trouble as possible."

"Thank you. And you will see him to-morrow?"

"Every day while there is occasion. It is a very singular affair. From what I can hear there was no robbery committed on either."

"There are deeper motives than the common greed of gold in such crimes as these," said John. "I am afraid it will be a very strange and a very sad case for Thorpendean."

The physician did not inquire what the speaker might mean. He did not deal with the mind any more than it affected the bodily health of his patients.

"It would be better, perhaps," suggested Falcon, in a low aside, "if Mr. Amory's evidence were not taken at all."

John shook his head.

"The truth must come out," he said. "I believe every word he said."

"So do I. But what will the investigation do for him?"

"Place him in danger," sighed John; "but he will have good friends, and innocence must make itself manifest."

"When it is too late, perhaps."

"We must trust in Heaven."

"The sort of thing that a chaplain says to a man on the scaffold," said Mr. Falcon, drily. "Take my advice, Mr. Lenmore, and get him out of the way as soon as you can, and let the other matter rest as it is."

"Why?"

"For his sake. Mr. Dacre can better afford to lose a fortune than hang his stepson."

John Lenmore shuddered at the ominous force of the detective's words.

(To be continued.)

THE NEW LAW ON FELONY.—The Act of Parliament passed on the 4th ult. to abolish forfeitures for treason felony makes some important alterations. From and after the passing of the Act no confession, verdict, inquest, conviction, or judgment of or for any treason, or felony, or *felo de se*, shall cause any attainder, or corruption of blood, or any forfeiture or escheat, but nothing in the Act is to affect the law of forfeiture consequent upon outlawry. Conviction for treason or felony is to be a disqualification for holding offices. Persons condemned of treason or felony may be condemned in costs, and for loss of property a Court may award any sum of money not exceeding 100*l.* by way of satisfaction or compensation. When a convict has completed his term of imprisonment, or been made a bankrupt, &c., he is exempted from the operation

of the Act. The Crown may appoint an administrator of a convict's property, who may pay debts and sums awarded by law or equity to persons defrauded by criminal acts of the convict, and allowances may be made for the support of the family of the convict. The property is to be preserved for the convict, and to revert to him on the completion of his sentence, death, &c. In default of an administrator being appointed by the Crown, an interim curator may be appointed by magistrates. Further executions on judgments may be issued against the property of convicts. There are other provisions amending the law as to the property of persons convicted of treason or felony.

MONTROSE; OR, THE RED KNIGHT.

CHAPTER III.

Hypolito: What news is this that makes thy cheek turn pale,
And thy hand tremble?
Victorian: Oh, most infamous!
The Count of Lara is a villain!
Hypolito: That is no news, forsooth!
The Spanish Student.

On the following morning the Count of Tripoli was astrir betimes, and his first movement was to look after his esquire, whose wound he found to be not at all dangerous. After the breaking of fast he drew Montrose aside for the purpose of taking counsel upon the present state of affairs in the country.

"My good Sir Darwin," said Raymond, after the matter had been fairly stated, "there is more of danger to our cause, and to all who remain true to it, than hath yet openly appeared. The striving of Bohemond for kingly rule over Tripoli and Armenia might not of itself be so disastrous, were the strife confined to the direct parties to the quarrel; for I do not deem that he would be emboldened to proceed in his unjust course against both Prince Rapin and myself were it not that he hath promise of other help."

"Other help?" repeated the earl, earnestly.

"Do you not understand me, Sir Darwin? Have you had no occasion to suspect something worse than hath yet appeared upon the surface?"

"Sir Raymond, I suspect much; but will you tell me, as my prince, what you have learned?"

"I have learned enough," replied the count, "to assure me there is a wide-spread treachery in Tripoli—aye, and for that matter, throughout all Syria. And yet I have thus far been unable to grasp at any of the facts. But I will tell you what I believe—what I feel that I know; you are aware that Malek-Adel, the brother of Saladin, has assumed rule over all Syria, with his seat of government at Damascus. In some respects he is more to be feared than was the great Sultan. What he lacks of Saladin's impetuous zeal and valour he more than makes up in craft and cunning. He has marked the dissensions in the Christian ranks, and is ready to take the most unholy advantage thereof. While Bohemond and Rapin are at strife one with the other, each aiming to extend his individual power and authority, the Moslem prince is playing fast and loose with them both. Now he is friendly to Antioch, and anon to Armenia, and all the while he is an enemy of the twain. He hath found one Christian Prince, to whom he is really friendly, and that is Vikern the Norman; and we may safely conclude that all who at present adhere to Vikern's interest are in the trap."

"But, sir count," said Montrose, "have you any knowledge of the nature of the understanding between Malek-Adel and this Norman knight, if understanding there be?"

"There is more than a mere understanding, Sir Darwin—there is a compact between them. Certain towns and fortresses now in possession of the Christians, Malek wants; and if he can have them he will help Vikern to the throne of Antioch and Tripoli."

"Sir Raymond!"

"But this is not the worst, my dear Montrose. When once the Norman shall have gained the principality, he will turn all his influence against the Cross."

"How, sir count—renounce his religion?"

"Yes. He thinks it a better thing to be a prince with great power and wealth, than to be a poor and humble follower of the Cross."

"And what think you of his gaining support from the Christian ranks?"

"Ah," replied Raymond, with a sad inclination of the head, "such support, I fear, will be too readily supplied. Our soldiers have not beheld such constancy and devotion on the part of their leaders as

should inspire them with either faith or fervour. From Richard of England and Louis of France down to the needy adventurer who can count his followers upon his fingers, our soldiers have seen but little else than strife for place and power. The glory of the Cross has been forgotten in the lust of self-aggrandisement."

"You speak truly, sir count. I have marked the coming storm, and await the crash. But tell me, have you considered what you will do?"

"Yes," answered Raymond. "I will gather up the true and the faithful, and save them if I can; and when I can do no more, if my life is spared, I will seek my native land."

The earl grasped the hand of his friend in token of his own fidelity, and after a pause he said, in a constrained tone:

"We may have traitors in our very midst."

"Yes—I think Jasper St. Julien is a traitor."

"I myself distrust the man," responded Montrose.

"And I think further," added Raymond, "that even now he is acting as a spy."

"Ha!"

"It is true."

"But in whose employ?"

"Do you know the character of the Emir Zarouf, of the Black Tower?"

"Aye, I know him for a deadly enemy of the Cross."

"And do you know that Vikern the Norman is in frequent communication with him?"

"I have heard so."

"And have you heard that Jasper St. Julien is their trusted agent—their go-between?"

"No!"

"And yet, so it is. My dear Darwin, he is beneath your roof. Watch him."

The earl wore a troubled look.

"Do you hesitate? Do you doubt me?" asked Raymond.

"No, no," cried Montrose; "I was only thinking what a viper I had warmed in my bosom. I have been a friend to St. Julien when he had no friends else. My roof has been his shelter, and my purse has been open to his use. What can he hope to gain by this treachery?"

"His eye is upon Lystra."

"Upon Lystra? Upon my own castle?"

"I doubt it not. But watch him."

"By heaven, I will!"

"And now," pursued the count, "how many men can you call to arms under your banner in case of need?"

"Five hundred, at least," replied the earl. "I have a hundred good men-at-arms in the castle; and I can muster four hundred in the town."

"That is better than I had expected. You will hold them in readiness, Sir Darwin; for Heaven only knows when the need may come. There are secret agencies at work which we may not combat; but we must be prepared against open attack. Keep an eye upon St. Julien; and keep an eye, too, upon the Black Tower; for in that gloomy fortress I am sure a great mischief is being brewed."

After some further discussion in the arrangement of details the Count of Tripoli bade adieu to the inmates of the castle, and took his leave.

Not long afterwards the earl entered the lower hall, where he found St. Julien wearing a dark and lowering look.

"What—alone, Sir Jasper?" said the host, banishing all outward show of suspicion. "Where are the rest of our friends?"

"Enjoying themselves, no doubt," the knight replied, in a sharp, curt tone; the contortion of his face plainly showing that he was not at that moment on good terms with anybody or anything.

"Where is Douglas?"

"I don't know." But in answering thus St. Julien spoke falsely. He knew that the young Scot was in the garden; for he had been out there watching and spying and eavesdropping.

The garden was an enclosed space, in the rear of the spacious court, hedged in by double rows of citrons and orange-trees. Near to a fountain, which was fed from a spring upon the mountain-side, and which threw a sparkling jet high into the air, sat Robert Douglas and Isabel Montrose. They had just stopped from a walk which St. Julien had probably followed until he had become tired.

"Isabel," said the knight, with some tremulousness in his tone, but yet frankly and boldly, "surrounded as we are by dangers on every hand, and knowing not what a day may bring forth, I am constrained to approach a subject which, otherwise, might have awaited another opportunity. You remember what

we used to say when we were children together—before we left our native land—when my father was living, and used to visit Montrose. You have not forgotten?"

"No, no," replied the maiden. "I remember that you used to tell me how you would be a knight, and how you would cover yourself with glory; how you would do noble deeds, and how—how—"

"What else, Isabel?"

"Oh, there were a great many other things." "But there was one thing in particular I used to say. I used to ask you, Isabel, if, when I should have won my knightly spurs, you would be my wife. Don't you remember?"

"I remember."

"And can you call to mind what your answer used to be?"

"Yes. I used to answer that I would."

Douglas put forth his hand, and touched the maiden's arm. His voice sank almost to a whisper, and his face wore an eager, anxious expression.

"Aye. And how would you answer that same question now?"

"That would depend," replied the bright-eyed girl, "upon who might ask it."

"If I should ask it?"

She looked up with a sweet smile—no hesitation, no doubt, but only firm and holy trust—and said: "I should keep the faith, Robert, and answer as of old."

"Mine, mine, Isabel?"

"Yes—for ever!"

"Oh! Heaven bless you! I am happy now."

And then, with hands fondly clasped, they told over the old story—that story which, though as old as the world, is always fresh and new in the morning of the heart's first love. They dwelt upon the blissful theme until the fall of an approaching footstep aroused them, and when they looked up they saw the earl.

"How now, my children? What manner of conference is this? Robert, what have you been telling to my daughter that leads her to cling so closely to your side?"

"I have asked her if she would be my wife," replied the youth, without hesitation.

"And what answer gained you?"

"An answer that hath given me joy beyond measure."

The old noble gazed upon the youthful pair for a time in silence. Then, while tears started to his eyes, he moved forward, and laid his hands upon their heads.

"My children," he said with deep solemnity, "may Heaven bless and keep you, and make you very happy. Your mutual love hath my hearty approval; and I know that the countess will joyfully unite with me in assent. And now let us return to the castle. St. Julien is upon the point of departure."

At the sound of that name Isabel shuddered, and shrank nearer to her lover, while Douglas felt a touch of dread—of alarm—which he had never before experienced. It was as though a prophetic whisper of evil had been sounded in his ear from the unseen.

When the party entered the hall of the keep they found St. Julien with his armour all on.

"Why in such haste, Sir Jasper?" asked Douglas.

"Only to follow out a fixed rule of my life," answered the other, in harsh, vindictive tones. "When I have found a place that does not want me, I always hasten to leave it."

"When shall we see you again?" asked our hero, seeming to take no notice of St. Julien's temper.

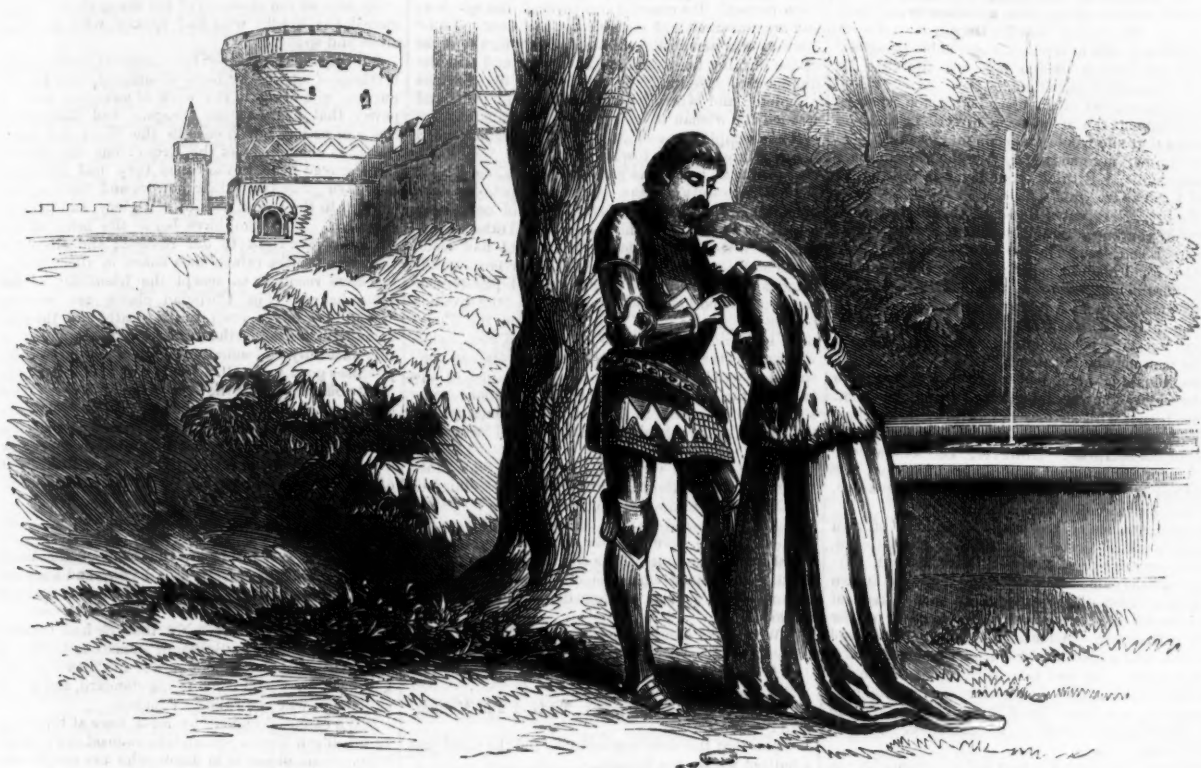
"If you look to see me very soon, you may be disappointed, Sir Robert; and, on the other hand, if you look to see me stay long away, you may behold the returning ere you expect it."

Having thus impudently and ungallantly spoken, the Gascon knight turned to where Isabel stood apart, and forcibly took her hand.

"Lady," he said, in a voice meant only for her ear, "I shall see you again shortly. Your image is graven on my heart, and must be ever with us, a part of my very self. Remember this!"

Isabel shrank away as from a poisonous reptile. The Gascon noticed the movement, and his eye flashed; but he spoke no further. Without even looking again at Douglas, and with only a nod to the host, he strode forth to the court, where he mounted his horse and rode away.

"Now by our lady!" cried Sir Darwin, after the dark-browed knight had gone, "I like not the method of his leaving. There's evil in that man's heart. But, my child, why do you tremble and turn pale?"



[PLIGHTING TROTH.]

Isabel told to them what St. Julien had said to her.

"By my soul!" cried Douglas, "the time may come when I can measure swords with the wretch in a good cause."

"No, no, Robert!" interposed Isabel, in alarm. "He is a bold, bad man! Do not expose yourself."

"By my knightly vows and honour!" exclaimed the youth, with proudly beaming look, "did I fear Jasper St. Julien I should be unworthy of your love. Dear lady, I have seen him in battle; I have fought by his side; and I know well the weight of his lance."

"Ah, Robert, I shall not fear the strength of his arm if it were put forth against you in open war, but I fear him as I would fear a serpent, or a wolf in its secret lair. I saw him look upon you with a hatred that was deadly. A viper may seem insignificant in an open space, but you would fear to tread upon one in a tangled wild wood."

"The girl speaks truly," said the earl; "but the evil man may not have power equal to kill. Let us put aside all doubt and fear until we shall have—"

His speech was interrupted by the entrance of his servant who announced that Jasper St. Julien was in the court, and demanded to speak with Sir Robert Douglas.

The company were amazed. What could the man want?

"Fear not, dearest," said the young Scot, for he saw that Isabel trembled with alarm. "I will soon find what is the occasion of this strange movement."

"I will go with you, my boy," volunteered Montrose.

Douglas and his host went out, and found St. Julien in his saddle.

"Sir Jasper," said the earl, "to what do we owe the honour of this speedy return?"

"My business is not with you, Montrose, but with the Marquis of Doon." And then turning to the latter, he added:

"Sir Robert Douglas, I had believed that I could go hence and crush out from my soul all thought of the indignity you have put upon me, and that I could forget it as having come from a source beneath my notice; but the aggrieved heart will not down at my bidding."

"Indignity?" repeated our hero in surprise. "What mean you?"

"Robert Douglas, do not add falsehood to your

other shortcomings. I heard certain words which you spoke to Raymond of St. Malo yesterday; and I have heard other words from your lips, addressed to another person. In short, you have directly stated and declared that you believed me to be 'a mercenary and evil-disposed villain!' Can you deny it?"

Douglas was startled, but not with fear. He remembered that he had used those words, or something to the same effect, in conversation with Raymond; but they had been drawn out by words still stronger spoken by the count. He could have explained the matter, but in doing so he would have been forced to drag Sir Raymond into the controversy, which he was not willing to do.

"Sir Jasper," he said, after due deliberation, "if you had played the eavesdropper to a little better purpose, and heard the whole of the conversation of which the words you have quoted formed a part, you would not find ground for the construction you now put upon them. I cannot deny that I spoke them."

Jasper St. Julien smote his hand upon his saddle-bow, and his face was dark with deadly passion and hate.

"Robert Douglas, you know well what you have done, and you know the right which is mine by the laws of chivalry. I demand that you make good your accusation at the point of the lance!"

"How?" exclaimed Douglas. "Do you challenge me to mortal combat?"

"Montrose shall decide if I have not the right."

The earl said he could not deny it.

"Then to mortal combat it shall be," said the youth. "I will not make advance towards an adjustment which I can see would simply be impossible of accomplishment. The battle is in your hands. Name the terms! and may God defend the right!"

"Now you give token of sense and justice," returned St. Julien, with grim and savage satisfaction. "I will make my demand for combat within the week. We will meet upon the plain, south of Lystra. I trust your courage will not forsake you before that time."

"Another word like that," cried Douglas, restraining himself with difficulty, "and I'll spit upon thee where thou sittest!—I will, so help me Heaven!"

"My next word shall be one of command!" And thus saying, Jasper St. Julien drew his rein and rode away, while the earl and his guest returned to the hall, where the ladies were told of what had passed.

"By my life," said Douglas, ingenuously, "I think St. Julien must be out of his mind. He should know that he is no possible match for me, either in strength or skill. As I live, I hold him as I would hold a fledgling."

Isabel gazed proudly up into her lover's face; and since she could not dissuade him from the conflict without dishonour, she would not betray a fear for the result.

Much surprise was expressed that St. Julien should have first left the castle, and then returned with his challenge. There was a mystery in the matter which they could not comprehend. And so there were other mysteries about them to which they trusted time would give ample solution.

CHAPTER IV.

It has been truly said by some wise man,
That money, grief, and love cannot be hidden.
Longfellow.

On the morning following the scenes last recorded the Lady Isabel stood before her polished mirror regarding the reflection of herself very critically.

"No, no, Margaret," she said, turning to her attendant, "my face is not pale. There are no fear-marks upon it."

This attendant was a fair-haired, bright-eyed girl, of about Isabel's own age, though somewhat smaller of stature. Her handsome, winning face gave token of wit and intelligence; and all who knew her knew her for one whose faith and judgment might be safely relied upon. She was of Scotch birth; her parents both dead; and her name, Margaret Ramsay.

"You misunderstood me, my dear lady. I did not mean that you had grown really pale. Oh, no,—you look very happy. But at times there is a white spot upon your cheek. I have marked you start and tremble since you have stood at the mirror. My lady! I should think you would be all happiness now."

Isabel smiled at the girl's quaint earnestness, and asked:

"Why so, Margy?"

"Because your lover has come back to you, true and faithful. And such a lover!"

"Aye—he has come back; and I know he is true; but he is going to fight with Jasper St. Julien."

"I trust that does not give you cause of fear," said Margaret, her bright eyes glowing with enthusiasm. "Since your lover hath chosen the profession of

arms, of course he must fight when the needs comes; and I see not how he can avoid this meeting with St. Julien without giving men a chance to say he is a coward. But what of that? Do you deem Jasper St. Julien a fit man to cope with our noble Douglas? I would not fear to pledge my own life that Sir Robert comes forth unscathed."

This had a good effect upon Isabel, for her own better judgment ran in the same direction; and she promised that she would entertain no more fear.

"And now, my good Margy," she said, with a winning smile, "I think your lover is waiting for you. I can spare you."

"My lover?" repeated the maid, blushing crimson.

"How do you know that he loves me?"

"Ah, I can see, Margy. But you need not tremble, for I blame you not; nor need you blush, since there is nothing to be ashamed of. Bertram is a true man, and a right brave gallant. But mind you one thing—both of you; if you ever marry him, he shall not take you from me. And now hasten, for the man may be impatient."

The blushing maid had no idea that her love was so widely known, and she was for the moment confused—not with shame, but with that delicious bewilderment of the senses which brings joy in the train of its surprise. However, she blessed her mistress for her kindness, and assured her that she would not suffer even a husband to bear her away, and then hastened from the apartment.

At the entrance of the castle a number of men were at work repairing the defence of the barbican. He who superintended the work was a stout, fair-haired youth, named Bertram; and he was known all up and down the broad plains and valleys of Lebanon for the brave and gallant esquire of Sir Darwin Montrose. A better soldier never followed a knight, and a more devoted friend never served a noble master. He had been with the earl from his boyhood, first as page, then as man-at-arms, and now as esquire; and there were knights in Palestine who might have deemed it no dishonour to cross swords with him.

Bertram had given his men full directions for the pursuing of their labours, and as he turned towards the inner court he beheld Margaret approaching him.

"You sent for me, Bertram," she said, as she gave him her hand.

"Yes, Margy. I have called you to disappoint you. We had planned that we would walk out among the palms this evening; but it cannot be. You will not be offended?"

"Are you called away?"

"I am."

"Your duty calls you?"

"Be sure naught else could have drawn me from my promised pleasure."

"Then go, Bertram; and may Heaven keep you from all harm."

"Bless you, dearest!" He kissed the maiden, and when she had gone he turned and passed out at the gate, turning his steps toward the town.

For a time the handsome face of the young esquire was lighted up by the joy-beams of his warmly-answered love; but anon a cloud settled upon his brow, and his step grew quicker and stronger, as with the impulse and weight of mighty emotion. At length he entered the town, and proceeded to a small dwelling near the outskirts, in which lived a widow whom he had often befriended, and whom he had of late taken into his confidence. She had once lived at the castle, and was warmly attached to Montrose. Here he made some change in his garb, and having conferred awhile with Dame Allcorn, he departed.

Bertram's next movement was towards the mountains, and upon his mission amid their deep fastnesses he was gone till night. It was fairly dark when he again reached the town, and when he entered the cottage he bore in his hand a compact bundle, which he deposited in a safe place while he ate his supper. When he had eaten he took a lighted lamp and retired to a small private apartment, where were a dressing table and a mirror—a place set apart for the use of the earl's officers who might find it convenient. The first care of the esquire upon gaining this room was to fasten the door upon the inside; and the next to drop a curtain over the window; after which he opened the bundle he had brought with him from the mountains.

And now our adventurer proceeded to a work of strange metamorphosis. First he removed the chief articles of his own clothing, after which he applied a pigment to the skin of his face, and neck, and hands, and arms, that gave to it the Arab tinge. Then he donned a Moslem garb such as was worn by the

merchants and syndics of Damascus, capping the transformation by a wig of black hair and a fine linen turban. He crawled out through the window, and went around and entered by the door. Dame Barbara was alarmed. He stood fairly in the light of the burning lamp, and spoke to her; and still she did not recognise him. So he deemed his disguise complete; and when he had revealed himself, and warned the woman to be secret, he took his leave.

Thus completely metamorphosed, Bertram wended his way through the town. The night was dark, there being no moon, and but few stars visible. Near the north-western confine, within a grove of palms, stood a mosque of the Moslems. It had once been a heathen temple; but the conquering Arabs had appropriated it to the service of Islam, and had made much addition and improvement. Four large quadrangles had been added; columns and pilasters of rare workmanship had been supplied, and the grounds had been beautified and adorned. Since the Christians had held the town this mosque had been somewhat neglected; but the Mussulman priests had continued to reside there, as it had been one of the terms of the truce that while the Christians were suffered to worship in Jerusalem, the mosques of the Mussulmans should be held sacred wherever situated.

Having reached the mosque Bertram glided into the court, and concealed himself behind a clump of shrubbery near to the main entrance, where he waited patiently. By-and-by an Arab chief approached, and entered the porch. Our adventurer crept cautiously up behind one of the columns, and was near to the new-comer when he demanded admittance. The applicant's alarm was four distinct knocks given in pairs.

"Who seeks admittance?" demanded a voice from within.

"A friend," answered the applicant.

"A friend to whom?"

"To God and Abraham! To God and Mohammed!"

Upon that the door was opened, and the chief was admitted within the temple.

Shortly after this, two other men entered the court, one of whom Bertram was sure was a Christian knight, despite the ample robe that enveloped his figure. The knight knocked at the door—the pair of double rap—ad in answer to the demand from within, gave same pass which had been given by the Arab, whereupon both he and his companion were admitted.

Very shortly after this our venturesome esquire concluded to try the experiment. He knew there was danger. If he was discovered, it would be death—death sure and instant. But he did not shrink. He had a duty to perform, and he was equal thereto. He advanced to the door, and knocked as he had observed the others do; and he conceived that these four knocks, given in couplets, or pairs, had an allusion to the pass—"To God and Abraham! To God and Mohammed!" which pass he gave unhesitatingly when it had been demanded, and which caused the door to be opened unto him. Beyond this he crossed an inner court, to the vestibule of the main temple, which he entered without hindrance. Of the hundreds of lamps suspended from the dome of the mosque only a few were lighted—just enough to break the darkness, and afford the eye an opportunity to distinguish between the human forms and the ghostly pillars and pilasters. There were a score, or more, of people present when Bertram entered, and he was not long in assuring himself that there were as many Christians as there were Mussulmans in the assembly.

"Do you come from the Black Tower?" asked a man who wore a robe and a cowl, but whom our esquire knew as a Christian knight.

"No," answered Bertram. "I come from Damascus."

"Ah; then you have seen the sultan?"

"Do you speak of Affdhal?"

"No. I speak of his uncle, Malek-Adel, who is more powerful than all the sons of Saladin, and whose allies we are."

"Yes," replied Bertram. "I have seen him, and he depends much upon the disaffected Christians."

"And he shall not depend in vain," said the knight, with emphasis.

At length, when full fifty men had assembled, the outer door was secured, and the conclave proceeded to business.

This was not the first time that Bertram had worn his present disguise. In the same garb he had visited the Black Tower a few evenings previously, and had

there gained intelligence of the present meeting, which he resolved to attend.

As soon as the attention of the assembly had been gained, the knight who had spoken with Bertram arose and spoke.

"Brothers," he said—"for a common cause makes brothers of us all—we have assembled here for the purpose of uniting in the work of sweeping away a power that has become arrogant and dangerous. Some of us left our homes in the West and came hither as champions of the Cross; but our leaders have proved false to the cause they had espoused, and have prostituted their powers and their opportunities to the basest uses of self-glory and aggrandizement. We who have borne the brunt of the battle have a right to our reward; and since the Christian princes refuse us a share in their spoils, we have resolved to accept the friendship of the Mussulmans. The Christian chiefs are warring among themselves even to the death, and the sons of Saladin are doing the same; but in the midst of this unseemly and unnatural strife a man arises who promises good to us all. I speak of Malek-Adel, the illustrious brother of the great Saladin, and the most gallant of all the Moslem chiefs. Let us join him; and since our Christian rulers in Syria and Palestine have shown to us that their religion is become only a cloak to cover the lust of power, we will throw it off, and join heart and hand with our new friends. I think I speak the minds of my companions."

A murmur of assent arose from the Christian knights.

And then arose Marouf, the Emir of the Black Tower. He had the eye of a hawk, and his physiognomy was not unlike the beaked front of that bird of prey.

He informed the assembly that he had been instructed by the true Sultan of Damascus to offer an equal share in wealth and power to those Christian knights who would come to his standard, and join in sweeping away the ruling Crusaders.

"We cannot do much business here at this time. In my Black Tower we can take counsel more safely. Our present object is to know who are our friends. In my tower we may find many needed conveniences. I have ample room there for honoured guests; and I have deep, strong dungeons for enemies. For, be sure, we have enemies to overcome."

"How many Moslem warriors can you bring into the valley?" asked a knight.

"That must depend somewhat," replied Marouf, "upon the number of Christians who will join us. How many, think you, will come to our standard?"

The recreant knight hesitated. He dared not promise many. It might not be an easy thing, after all, to induce the brave and battle-scarred veterans of the Cross to forsake their old standard. But he finally answered:

"I know of many good and valiant knights who will join us. But look ye: Hubert, Bishop of Tripoli, is in Lystra. If we could manage to win him over to our cause, or even to make it appear that we had so done, we might count upon the majority of his flock."

"Good!" cried Marouf. "The bishop hath reviled and bearded me. Bring him to my tower, and we will try and persuade him."

"It shall be done!" said the knight.

"And now," pursued the emir, "there is one more subject to be considered; and in some respects it is the most important, at this time, of all. The castle of Montrose is the Christian stronghold of this valley; and since we are well assured that the stout earl cannot be swerved from his allegiance, we must take measures for his removal from our path. His influence over the men of Lystra is great, and our possession of the bishop might be of little avail if the Lord of Montrose were left to exert his sway."

At this point, a man who had hitherto remained in the shadow of a deep arch came forward. He was enveloped in a long robe, with a cowl over his head, but the clang of metal told that he wore armour beneath.

"Brothers," he said, "let the castle and its inmates rest for the present. I will be answerable; and I can work better if I am left to pursue my own course."

"Who speaks?" asked Marouf.

"It is I, Jasper St. Julien," replied the speaker.

"Good!" exclaimed the emir. "The Sultan Malek-Adel hath sent to me high commendation of thee. Be it thine, then, to look to the castle."

Bertram clutched his hands till the nails almost eat into the flesh. For this, among other things, had he come—to learn if Jasper St. Julien were in truth the traitor he suspected.

Ever long after this the meeting was dissolved, and the members thereof wended their way into the night. Bertram glided away unobserved, and hurried on towards the distant cottage. The dwellings of that town were still and dark, and the inhabitants slept; and if they dreamed, they surely dreamed not of the evil that was upon them. They had known of the troubles of their princes, and of dangers to the cause of the Cross; but not that they themselves could be marked out by the demon of discord and destruction—marked out for woe and extermination. They had not thought how the fiend of treason, once let loose, stops at no consideration of humanity; nor how traitors, once upon the war-path, become the most bitter and deadly enemies. But they were to awake, by-and-by, to a full knowledge of the terrible truth.

(To be continued.)

THE VEILED LADY.

BY THE

Author of "Fairleigh," "The Rival Sisters," &c., &c.

CHAPTER LVII.

FOR a moment after John Moran uttered those words whose dread significance caused a chill of terror to creep slowly over her frame, Miss Angelina stood and gazed upon him as if petrified; then her nerves relaxed, and starting forward, and raising her manacled hands imploringly, she wildly cried:

"Oh, what of Alice? monster that you are, what have you done with her?"

He threw himself into a chair, crossed his legs, and while a mocking smile curled his lips, sneeringly answered:

"Ha, ha! you are very much interested all at once; feel anxious, don't you? Well, I'll tell you where she is—when I get ready, ha, ha!"

Miss Angelina did not storm, nor rave, that—always the first portion of her anger—had passed away, and now her wrath lost itself in grief, which was not wholly selfish, as she had loved Alice as much as women of her nature can love. She did not reply to his words, but turned her eyes towards Mr. Dikely.

"He cannot help you," said Moran, while his heavy brows rolled down, and his eyes gleamed with malignant exultation. "No, he, the ever-present Mr. Dikely, has at last found his master, and will not go on the stage again at present; the last act in which he will figure is near at hand, and, it shall be tragical."

Dikely said nothing, but his fists closed upon the cords stood out upon his hands, and his face turned a vivid red, and then white. It was evident that rage deep and dire was burning within his breast, and was only restrained from bursting forth by his resolute will.

The two ladies gazed into each other's faces as if seeking one spark of hope, but found it not; only sorrow and despair were reflected upon their features.

In a moment Moran arose, and approaching Dikely, while his eyes burned with the light of hate, and scorn parted his lips, he scoffed:

"Perhaps you would like to say 'Dawning Light' now? perhaps you would? It would please me to hear it. Ha, ha, ha!"

Dikely's teeth grated. The insinuating, mocking insolence of that villain was almost intolerable, but by a great effort he controlled himself and remained silent.

The grin of triumph grew broader upon Moran's features and as he reflected that the cause of his many defeats was at last in his grasp, he emitted a low, howling laugh, and catching one end of Dikely's moustache, pulled several hairs out by the roots, and holding them before his eyes, exclaimed:

"Do you see these? You shall feel minute torture! Hang me but I'm half a mind to pull every hair out of your head and face in the same way!"

Dikely trembled and dropped his head as if humbled, then suddenly springing to his feet, he raised his fettered hands, and brought them down with crashing force upon the tyrant's brow.

So quick and unexpected had been the action that Moran had no opportunity to resist, and ere he was aware of his prisoner's intention, he was stretched senseless upon the floor.

The ladies drew closer to each other and shuddered.

Dikely darted a contemptuous glance at the fallen rascal, and then crossing the cabin, drew close to Miss Seraphina, and hastily commanded:

"Put your hand in the lower pocket of my coat, there is a key there—quick!"

With a faint hope that from this an avenue of escape might open, she did as desired, and then, while the gloom of bitter disappointment shaded her face, she said:

"There is none there."

His brows contracted, his eyes scintillated, then his features relaxed into repose, and resuming his seat, he merely said:

"I had one—that unpleasant companion of mine must have relieved me of it. I'll thank him some time."

The tone in which the last words were uttered, varied a little from that of the first, it grew deeper and had an ironical ring which expressed more than could a volume of threats.

Presently, Moran returned to consciousness. Raising himself upon his elbow, while his frame shook with rage, he turned his eyes, which now shone with a steely brilliancy frightful in its steady glare, upon Dikely, and in spasmodic gasps the words left his lips:

"That is your last blow! now your body shall make food for the fishes!"

And drawing a long, slender knife from his breast, he twirled it in deadly complacency before his eyes, and then slowly rising to his feet and finally grasping the instrument of death in his right hand, approached Dikely.

The faces of the ladies grew paler if possible. Miss Angelina seemed changed to another being. She said nothing, but her features wore a look of acute pain, intermingled with horror. Miss Seraphina gazed in mute terror upon the villain, until she saw that he was about to put his heinous purpose into execution, and then, with a courage which had heretofore lain hidden in her being, she dashed towards him, clutched his wrist with both hands, and in consternation cried:

"Are you a coward? Would you stab a fettered man? Forbear! Hold!"

He turned his glittering eyes upon her, and while his brows rolled down, like clouds of night he raised his arm, hurled her from him, and then laughed that low dry, fiendish laugh, and lifted the glistening blade above his victim's neck.

Rigid with the terror which the barbarous acts of that inhuman wretch had engendered, Miss Angelina looked upon the senseless form of her companion, and then glanced towards the murderer, whose knife was trembling for the fatal plunge. She closed her eyes, while her flesh seemed changed to ice.

A moment in evil contemplation Moran regarded the man whose life he sought, and even he, hardened, depraved as he was, and in the midst of his all-absorbing revenge, could not but admire the fortitude and stoicism which he displayed, for not a muscle of his face moved or gave the slightest indication that he realised his danger.

A quick bright light shot into Moran's eyes; his brows rolled up, his lips parted in malicious pleasure, and returning the dagger to its sheath, he shook his fist in Dikely's face, and articulated:

"You're brave, curse you! You're cool, confound you! You're too good to kill; you'd take it too easy. You're just the one to torture, and I'll do it until you shall moan, and screech, and twist in pain like the inmates in Bedlam. Ugh!" and his form quivered with rage.

A little relief was afforded to Miss Angelina by the reconsideration of his deadly project, and raising her fettered hands, she pointed to the inanimate form of Miss Seraphina, and said, in a voice made hard and husky by her blended grief and dismay:

"There is your work. You have stricken to the earth a woman. Look at her and fear Heaven, for judgment will overtake you!"

These words were not spoken in that virulent way which characterised her, but they were earnest and thrilling, and at variance with her usual nature.

Moran cast a disdainful, and scornful glance towards Miss Seraphina, and carelessly said:

"Bah! she isn't a woman; she's a terna-gant, a scold, and so are you; so hold your tongue, or I'll have you into the hold."

These words, proceeding as they did from a miscreant, taught Miss Angelina a lesson—that, notwithstanding how low and debased man may become, he still looks to woman for those finer, gentler, and more delicate qualities which are one of the natural and distinctive traits of her sex. He may find them in men, but they lack the charm of grace and tenderness, without which they amount to nothing. They are woman's birthright. Man appreciates them not in man; he looks to woman for them.

Could it be possible that aught could be left in a villain such as he to reprove her? It was even so; and although he was so depraved that it would not have altered his treatment to her had she been kind, gentle, and womanly, still the feeling of contempt lingered in his breast, as it does in that of every man, good or bad, when he beholds a woman who is either a scold, a doll, or an assumer of masculinity.

Woman, beware! Remember that only in your own sphere, with your own tender and most potent powers, when exercised naturally, can the world be improved and benefitted by your presence. Beware

of fanatics, and revelationists, who seek to delude you, and destroy "home, sweet home," Their counsel is sycophancy and deceit; the path they point out the road to ruin.

Moran stood silent a moment after replying to Miss Angelina, and then, while a mocking smile played over his features, he raised Miss Seraphina from the floor and bore her to a chair.

Presently she opened her eyes, and looking round, bewildered and with fear, tremulously said:

"Oh! has he killed him? My head, my head!—how it aches!"

"No, dear; he lives," replied Miss Angelina, with a tenderness she never before exhibited. "But let me see if your head is hurt."

The first words of Miss Seraphina brought back to Moran thoughts of his intended victim, who for the moment he had unaccountably forgotten. And now his anger again burst forth; his face assumed that diabolical look which no other ever had; and, striking his fists together, he fiercely shouted:

"Now, you iceberg, we'll try fire, and see if you'll melt—ha! ha! ha! My time has come; Ho! without there! Starboard watch, below!"

"Oh, what new crime is this? what is he about to do?" gasped Miss Seraphina, clinging to her friend's arm.

"Heaven only knows!" responded Miss Angelina, and shuddered as that hideous grinning face drew near.

Nearer together crept those terror-stricken women, while their hearts vibrated with unnatural rapidity, and their brows throbbed with pain.

Moran strode the cabin impatiently, muttering oaths between his teeth. At length he paused, drew a pistol, aimed it an instant at Dikely, then whirled it above his head, and touched the spring.

A deafening report echoed through the cabin, volumes of sulphurous smoke made dim the forms of its occupants, shrieks escaped the lips of the afflicted women and mingled with the hoarse laugh of the man-fiend.

"Oh, is he dead?—is he dead?" cried Miss Seraphina, lifting her pale face.

Miss Angelina pressed her pinioned hands to her brow as if to gain strength to glance towards Dikely, and then withdrew her hands and ejaculated:

"Are you—are you hurt, Mr. Dikely?"

"He never hit his mark in the whole course of his life."

This, the characteristic reply, was spoken in such an indifferent tone that upon their excited senses it sounded like the words of one insane—for how could man be so unconcerned when in momentary danger of losing his life?

In a moment heavy steps resounded over the companion-way stairs, and the next instant the first and second mate burst into the room, and simultaneously exclaimed:

"Are you hurt, captain?"

"You lubbers! How many times have I got to call? Were you asleep?"

"No, captain. We did not hear you."

"Well, you hear now. Away with that rascal; stow him in the hold; iron his feet. Away with him!"

The men advanced. Each grasped an arm of Dikely, at the same time ordering him to rise. He acceded to their request, and walked from the room with the docility of a child.

As those horrified and unprotected women saw him depart in whose presence their only hope of safety seemed to lie, an utter desolation came over them, succeeded by a rush of renewed anguish which unlocked the flood-gates of their hearts, and in showers their tears burst forth.

With an insidious smile lurking around the corners of his mouth, and his eyes glowing with the light of inhuman glee, Moran separated the two ladies, seated himself between them, and glancing alternately from one to the other, mockingly said:

"It pleases you to have me at your side? How romantic, in my graceful yacht on the briny deep, ha, ha-a!"

With a look of disgust and abhorrence upon her features Miss Seraphina essayed to move.

Rudely grasping her arm he glared angrily upon her, and menacingly muttered:

"Dare to move and I'll have you thrown into the hold, do you understand?"

Only too plainly was that terrible fact before her mind, and closing her eyes that his repulsive features might at least be shut from her view, she sank back against the wall, breathing with laboured action.

Pinching Miss Angelina's cheek, and wrinkling his face until it appeared more revolting than ever, he pressed it close to hers, and hissed:

"Wouldn't you like to know where your precious Mr. Smiles is—your darling companion? ha, ha! I've got 'em all, ha, ha-a!"

"Oh, man, most wicked and profane, what have you done with him?"

"Listen!"

And he raised his hand, while his eye gleamed. At his voice and gesture so ominous, a silence most oppressive prevailed.

An instant of breathless suspense, and then over their heads sounded a clanking of chains, the slow step of heavy feet, and a shuffling as if of the dragging of a body. Anon a plunge was heard, the waters dashed against the sides of the schooner, and then all was still.

"Oh, what can those dreadful noises mean? What have you done?" queried Miss Angelina, in a quivering whisper.

"Ha, ha-a!" rang out that demon-like laugh. "Another dies—so they all shall go!" And then he drew the shaking women, by main strength, until their faces touched his, and while his eyes blazed, he added: "And so you shall go too, if you don't obey me, down—down into the sea, ha, ha! where the shark swims, ha, ha-a!"

A spasm of pain swept over their features, their minds were filled with a loathing and unutterable terror which seemed to freeze the blood in their veins and congeal the tears upon their eyelids, and with eyes closed they trembled in silence.

Moran glanced from one to the other, chuckled with satisfaction and tightening his grasp upon their necks until they gasped for breath, he muttered, with cruel, stinging irony:

"Won't you enjoy your sweet selves? A voyage at sea with me, whom you love so much, for a companion! What nice times we shall have, ha, ha!"

"What?" cried Miss Angelina, as new dismay was added to her load of grief and terror. "Oh, you are not about to sail, you will not carry us from our native land—our home? Oh, mercy—have mercy!"

As the thought of continued life upon that terrible vessel became fully presented to Miss Scraphina's mind, she determined to make one appeal, and clasping her hands, and raising her pallid face in sorrowful entreaty, she articulated, in a low voice:

"We have never injured you. Why will you condemn us to such misery—why will you subject the innocent to cruelty? Oh, man—man, if you have one feeling that is worthy of the name, if you have one kind thought, if you have one atom of heart left, oh, send us back to our home—oh, send us back!"

While she had been speaking Moran's expression had changed almost with each word, and as she concluded, he laughed once more that hollow, dismal laugh, and then gnashing his teeth he ejaculated, in a voice of blended rage and wild delight:

"I have brought you here to keep! I have a heart, but it feeds on misery, and grows big with glee when I see the work of my hands, ha, ha! We'll sail, we'll fly on the billows—but will never go back—ha-a!"

Their hearts sank like lead, their tortured spirits quailed. Moran regarded them a moment with a grin of demoniacal satisfaction, then with a muttered curse left the cabin, ascended to the deck, and then descended to the hold.

Lying upon a coarse matting, his hands and feet pinioned, appeared the noble Dikely. His face was somewhat whiter than when he left the cabin, and his eyes were reflectively downcast. As he saw Moran, his eyes flashed, his teeth came silently together—no more.

Moran set his lantern upon a keg, and turned his face, which appeared more frightful under the dim rays, towards Dikely. A moment he regarded him in silence; then with an expression of mingled hate, revenge, and exultation distorting his features, he drew his knife from his breast, pricked Dikely's flesh with the point, and while that weird laugh blended with the sighing of the waters, he howled:

"Where's your attendant spirits? Why don't they come? Ha, ha-a! you're mine at last! You don't mind the knife, but we'll try hotiron, and see if you'll melt, ha, ha! hot—hot iron, ha, ha-a!"

(To be continued.)

"ALL THAT'S BRIGHT MUST FADE."—The most fasting houses have their seasons more or less of a certain constitutional strength. They have their springtime—their prosperous beginnings; they have their time for ripening fruit in the full sunshine of prosperity; they have their autumnal decline, and their extinction in the winter of adversity—not always to rise again in another springtime of prosperity. In proof of this, history furnishes us with the examples of the Plantagenets, the Staffords, and the Nevilles. The great-great-grandson of Margaret Plantagenet, daughter and heiress of George Duke of Clarence, followed the craft of a cobbler, at a little town in Newport, Shropshire, in 1637. Thus the expiring blood of Lancaster had indeed sunk to the ground. "Man being in honour abideth not." Witness the following: Mr. Joseph Smart, of Hales Owen, a butcher, was the lineal descendant of Edward Woodstock, Earl of Kent, sixth son of Edward

I., King of England, and entitled to royal arms. Mr. George Wilmot, keeper of the turnpike-gate at Cooper's Bank, near Dudley, and Mr. Stephen James Penny, sexton (late) at St. George's, Hanover Square, were lineal descendants of Thomas Plantagenet, Duke of Gloucester, fifth son of Henry III. The last male representative of the great Duke of Buckingham, Roger Stafford, born at Malpas, in Cheshire, in 1572, was refused the inheritance of his family honours on account of his poverty. This unfortunate youth went by the name of Studd, indignant that his patronymic of Stafford should be associated with his humble lot. Of the Nevilles, the direct heir in the senior line, Charles, the sixth Earl of Westmoreland, lived to an advanced age in the Low Countries, "meanly and miserably;" and George Neville, who was created Duke of Bedford by King Edward IV., that he might be of suitable rank to espouse the Lady Elizabeth Plantagenet, was eventually degraded from all titles and rank on the ground of indigence. At present, six peers of England have descent from the Lord Protector—Earls of Morley, Chichester, Rothes, Cowper, Clarendon, De Grey and Ripon.

REGINALD WARNER.

CHAPTER XX.

LEAVING the familiar scenes of home, let us now return, in imagination, to the stronghold of the brigands where Vivian Warner was a captive.

The life of these outlaws moved on in its accustomed channels—a life of fierce excitement, of continual struggle, and of almost continuous success. Now and then some one of the band fell by the bullet of a soldier or a traveller; but there was merely one less to share the spoil, one more hastily-dug grave in the mountain-side, and the raid and revel went on as gaily as before.

One individual alone was changed of all that reckless, law-defying band—Zerlina. A hopeless but sincere attachment had opened her eyes to the true character of brigand life. Her own unworthiness, the unworthiness of her associations, debarring her from all hope of peace and honour, appalled her as she made it the subject of her meditations. From the time that this new light dawned upon her soul she steadily refused to receive any share of the plunder. The jewels that once shone enticingly in her eyes had lost their splendour; from the rich dresses brought by her father she turned away in loathing.

When he inquired the cause of this change she frankly admitted that she was weary of the life they led, and earnestly implored Orsini to abandon it. But he laughed at her scruples, and scouted her proposition. His career was chosen—he loved it—he would not forego its excitement for any position that the peaceful world could offer.

Zerlina, therefore, could only watch and wait for some opportunity to escape from the thralldom which her soul abhorred.

Veiling her anxieties and her resolution under a calm exterior, she assumed a vigilant attitude, and nothing that passed escaped her close attention.

There was a mystery in her father's movements that piqued her curiosity. Sometimes, when he thought he was entirely unobserved, she noticed that he collected a store of provisions, and concealing them under his cloak, left the cave, and was absent for half-an-hour at a time. This was so often repeated that she determined to seize the first favourable opportunity to follow him and surprise his secret—if secret there were.

The occasion came one dark and stormy night, during the absence of the entire band upon some predatory expedition.

Orsini, believing himself unwatched, prepared a stock of provisions, and providing himself with a dark lantern and a cloak, left the cave. Zerlina followed him, treading softly, keeping always in the shadow, guided by the sound of the brigand's footsteps.

Once outside the cave, the brigand chief paused, lighted his lantern, and then moved on up the face of the hill. Reaching a screen of bushes, he stooped down and crawled through an opening of the foliage. Zerlina, after waiting a few moments, followed his example, and stood, screened by the leaves, in an open rocky area. Here she saw her father bend down and raise a trap-door, disclosing a dark yawning aperture, like the mouth of a well. He next uncoiled a long knotted rope, one end of which was made securely fast to an iron ring. Tying his package of stores to the rope he lowered it down into the depths of the abyss, calling out:

"Below there! Are you alive?" A faint voice from below replied in the affirmative. Then came some broken words, in a foreign accent, of which Zerlina could only distinguish "mercy, liberty, air," and she fancied the speaker added, "I am dying."

But to whatever was said Orsini deigned no reply. He merely drew up the rope again, coiled it away, and then closed the trap-door.

Brushing past Zerlina without detecting her presence, the brigand then began the descent of the mountain, followed by his daughter. Reaching the mouth of the cave, he, fortunately for her, extinguished his light, and found his way through the entrance in the dark, every step being familiar to him. It was equally so to Zerlina. The girl made her way noiselessly and waited at the mouth of the inner cave till her father had retired, when she stole to her own apartment undetected.

What she had seen and heard kept her awake all night. Some victim was immured in a subterranean cell, the very existence of which had hitherto remained unknown to her, and was probably a secret which Orsini revealed to no one. That the prisoner was a person of importance, and that his fate was a profound secret, was evident from the mystery with which the brigand had shrouded his midnight visits. Immured in a living grave, dying, perhaps, far away from his friends, what condition more deplorable!

Though the pathway leading to the scene of the tragedy was hidden and intricate, yet Zerlina, felt sure that she could find her way thither. At any rate she would attempt it on the first favourable opportunity.

As if to specially meet her wishes, the very next day the opportunity occurred. The whole band took their departure, and this time Orsini went with them.

After waiting till they were far away, Zerlina, having provided herself with some restoratives, left the cave, and began her search for the pathway she had followed on the preceding night.

After losing the clue several times she succeeded in hitting it, and found at last the trap door and the coil of rope. The rope was so ponderous that it resisted her unaided efforts to raise it. Finally, using an oak branch for a lever, she lifted it and threw it back. Bending down over the dark opening, she called aloud, but no voice responded to her appeal. The silence was appalling. Still, after listening intently, she thought she distinguished a faint moan.

Her resolution was instantly taken. Uncoiling the knotted rope, she dropped it into the hole, and then grasping it with both hands and feet, began to descend. It taxed her strength to the utmost, but her muscles had been developed by exercise in the mountain air, and were as tough as steel. The opening, at first receiving the daylight darkened as it descended, then grew light again, as she found her footing in a narrow cell, faintly illuminated by a lateral opening in the rock, communicating, doubtless, with the face of the mountain.

For a few moments she could distinguish no object; but at last she recognised, lying on a heap of straw, Vivian Warner—but how changed from the vigorous, bright-complexioned youth of a few weeks before!

At first she thought him dead, but kneeling beside him, she ascertained that his pulse and heart still beat. She moistened his lips with a cordial she had brought, and by degrees he revived, and was able to swallow some of the elixir.

As soon as his eyes rested on the dark, but lovely face of the mountain girl, they brightened, and he pressed her hand, as he said:

"Thanks—thanks! You have saved my life."

Then he sat up and stretched his limbs.

"Ah!" said he, "you know not what I have suffered during these long, weary weeks of captivity."

"And I—I thought you at liberty among your friends," said Zerlina.

Vivian gazed at her in surprise.

"I have never had a moment of liberty since I fell into your father's hands," he said. "From the first dungeon in which I was immured, he led me hither secretly, and here he has himself brought me food."

Zerlina was all amazement.

"Do you deny," she said, "that you were set at liberty, all your papers given to you, that you took leave of me and pressed my hand wearing the ring I gave you?"

"I do deny it," replied Vivian. "And the proof is that I am here. What wild tale is this you are telling me?"

"No tale," said Zerlina; "and yet a marvellous mystery. I tell you that I saw you—or a person exactly resembling you—set at liberty; that I had no idea that the person was other than what he seemed—yourself. If he was an impostor he has imposed on everybody, for I saw by the paper that he had gone to Florence, been recognised as yourself, told the story of his capture and escape, thence went to Marseilles and took ship for England, where, the papers say, for great interest attaches to his person, that he is about to marry a wealthy lady to whom he was engaged."

"Then," groaned Vivian, "am I the victim of a fate as terrible and strange as ever crushed a mortal to the earth. Who can this person be, who

is my counterpart—my shadow—my other self? And to think he has robbed me of my fortune and my bride, and I a helpless prisoner, when I should be on the path of vengeance!"

"Am I not here?" asked Zerlina, reproachfully. "A woman who has once loved can accomplish everything for the man to whom she has given her heart. Fear not," she added, sadly, "my wild dream is over; but we can be friends, can we not?"

"Aid me to escape from this dungeon, and count on my gratitude and my devoted services."

"You can do nothing for me," said Zerlina, shaking her head, mournfully. "My lot in life is irrevocably fixed. I will not abandon my father till he falls before the hand of justice—and it must come to that at last. When his fate is sealed then I will enter a convent, and pass the remainder of my days in penitence and prayer. But that is for the hereafter—now is the time for action. Are you strong enough to climb hence to the outer air?"

"Strong enough!" replied Vivian. "The cordial you gave me—the hope of liberty—has brought back all my strength. The way to freedom—"

"Is by this rope. Cling to it firmly. If you loose your hold death follows."

"Thanks, maiden," said Warner. "But your father—the robber bard?"

"Are absent—have no fear of them. Mount quickly."

Vivian Warner needed no urging. He began the ascent with vigour, and as he climbed upwards the fresher air renewed his strength. He soon stood safe and sound upon the brink of the chasm.

Then he called to Zerlina to cling fast to the rope, and, bracing his feet, drew her up without an exertion on her part.

"Thank Heaven, and your kind heart, maiden," he said. "I am once more free—but," he added, "as poor as the veriest beggar of Naples."

"Not so poor as you think," said Zerlina. "Here are jewels and gold—nay, decline them not, they are your own, plundered from your baggage and bestowed on me. You do me a service in ridding me of stolen goods."

Of course Vivian did not hesitate to reclaim his own; but he selected a costly ring, and pressed it on the acceptance of the shrinking girl.

"Take it, Zerlina," he said. "It is no love-token, but a gage of gratitude and friendship."

"As a token of friendship I receive it," said the girl, placing the jewel upon her finger. "And now follow me; I will guide you faithfully through the intricacies of the mountain paths, and set you on the road to Rome."

After an hour's descent they reached the highway. "Here," said Zerlina, "we part for ever. Think of me sometimes; and when you are happy with your wife tell her the story of Zerlina."

She held out her hand. Vivian grasped it warmly, and pressed it to his lips. The moment he released it she turned, and bounding up the mountain with the fleetness of a chamois, disappeared beyond a jutting rock, and was lost to his sight.

Then Vivian Warner turned his face towards Rome.

That night Orsini carried provisions as usual to the secret cave. He found everything undisturbed, apparently, as he had left it, the trap-door in its place, the rope coiled away snugly. But when he had lowered down the provisions the prisoner did not remove them; when he called to him there was no reply.

So Matteo Orsini, cursing the exertion he was compelled to make, after a day of toil and skirmishing, went down into the dungeon, only to find the bird flown.

He was dismayed; not so much at the escape of the prisoner as at the discovery of a hiding-place, which he believed to be perfectly secure and known only to himself. It shook his confidence in his own resources—it gave him a sense of danger. Evidently there were spies and traitors in his camp; but who were they? Never for a moment did he suspect his own daughter, who met him on his return with a serene countenance and with a smile of welcome.

CHAPTER XXI.

CONRAD saw himself on the eve of the realisation of his hopes; the marriage day was fixed—every obstacle swept away and a scheme of unparalleled audacity and villainy about to be crowned with complete success.

Men like him, utterly destitute of principle, while completely on their guard, so long as doubt and danger environ their plans, are apt to exhibit weak points when no immediate peril presents itself.

Conrad was so certain of success that he deemed it no longer necessary to bridle his passions and inclinations.

One night, only a few days before the appointed

bridal, he went to the gaming-house before mentioned. Perhaps he would not have gone if he had been entirely himself, but he had been passing the evening with some wild young fellows, and his brain was giddy with champagne. It is true he spoke clearly and walked steadily, but his reasoning faculties were impaired, and he was utterly reckless.

He saw Dr. Martin, but did not immediately accost him, contenting himself with watching him, unobserved, as he thought. Martin (Dr. Summers) however, though he did not look at the adventurer, was aware of his presence, and governed himself accordingly.

The doctor played recklessly and lost constantly—till at last the banker swept away his last pound. Then he rushed wildly away from the table, and as he brushed past Conrad, muttered to himself:

"Utterly lost and ruined!"

Conrad overheard him, as the doctor intended he should, and grasping his arm, said:

"Where are you going, doctor?"

"No matter—it is none of your business," replied the doctor, shaking off his arm roughly. His eyes were bloodshot and there was a well-simulated look of despair in his face.

"What's up?" asked Conrad.

"I am ruined!" said the doctor. "My last pound gone."

"What of that?" said Conrad, calmly. "You have your profession to fall back upon. I am told that you are a most skillful surgeon."

"I was—I am still," replied the doctor. "But who will employ a knife in the hands of a notoriously dissipated man? Drink and cards have ruined me."

"What do you propose to do?"

"No matter; it is none of your business."

"Pshaw!" said Conrad, passing his arm within the doctor's, in spite of his remonstrance, "what's the use of talking so foolishly? Come along with me."

"Not a step, till you tell me why and wherefore."

"Why, for your own good, of course. What would you say to the man who would pay you for a little professional advice the sum of five hundred pounds?"

"I would give myself to him, body and soul."

"Then I'm the man for you, and you're the man for me," said Conrad. "Now, do you know a place where we can hold a little confidential conversation together?"

"Yes."

"Then come on."

The doctor had engaged, under his assumed name, a little room in a neighbouring street, where he could not only change his dress, but pursue certain scientific investigations he was conducting undisturbed.

Thither he led his companion, and they were soon closeted together, with the door locked.

"I don't know," Conrad began, "what is the practice among surgeons—but before lawyers open their lips to clients they require a retaining fee."

He took out his pocket-book and selecting a one hundred pound bank-note handed it to the astonished doctor.

"Will that do to begin with?" he asked, carelessly.

"It is munificent!" exclaimed the doctor, pocketing the note with well-feigned eagerness. "My friend! my benefactor! my preserver!"

"There—there—that will do," said Conrad. "Now listen to me. I wish to ask you if marks and devices on the person produced by tattooing can be removed by any process or operation."

"Only by the operation of cutting away the flesh, which, of course, leaves a very ugly scar."

"No matter for the scar," said Conrad. "But suppose the mark is deeper—suppose it is a brand!"

"Then we must cut deeper, that's all. But, of course, it would leave a very unpleasant scar."

"But the operation would not endanger life?"

"Not if skillfully performed and the wound properly dressed. But I don't exactly understand what you are driving at?"

"I have a mark upon my person," said Conrad.

"It was done when I was a boy in a spirit of bravado—it is a disagreeable mark, and I wish to get rid of it."

"You promise me the utmost secrecy?" said the doctor. "Don't you know the rules of our profession?"

Thereupon Conrad bared his shoulder, and displayed the fatal T. F., the government brand of the French convict when sentenced to hard labour for life.

The surgeon instantly recognised it—he had seen it in France when pursuing his professional studies there. But he was wholly unprepared for a revelation like this. He had convinced himself that the man was unworthy of the hand of Clara Vane, that his life would not bear probing, but that he was a

branded felon filled him with horror and amazement. If this man was a felon, then his father, too, must be an impostor—a confederate—it was a conspiracy to ruin and plunder the Vanes.

As these thoughts flashed through his mind, it required all his professional coolness to disguise his emotions and to assume an air of indifference.

"T. F.!" he said. "What do those letters stand for?"

"Tom Fanshaw, the name of my boy friend," replied Conrad. "He bears my initials, V. W. We were sworn comrades—Damon and Pythias. It was a wild freak of ours—this mutual branding."

"Boys will be boys," said the surgeon.

"Well," said Conrad, "can you remove this record of boyish folly?"

"Yes; but though I am interested in having the operation performed, I wouldn't advise you to submit to it. There will be a wound that will require several days to heal—it's out of sight—where's the harm in it?"

"I choose to have it removed," said Conrad.

"And if you do it I will give you five hundred pounds."

"Say no more, I'll do it."

"When?"

"To-morrow, at eleven o'clock."

"Where?"

"Here."

"Good night, then, doctor; I shall be punctual. Take a good night's rest that your hand may be steady. I trust myself to you."

"I have him!" thought the doctor, when the door had closed. "Who would have thought that handsome fellow was a jail-bird! Vivian Warner, forsooth! and Reginald Warner, Esq., of Warner Hall, Yorkshire! They're a pretty pair. If the truth should ever come out, my pretty Clara would never hold up her head again! But if I save her from ruin, can I not count upon her gratitude! At any rate I will do my duty."

(To be continued.)

LEIGHTON HALL.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Why wilt thou kill my heart?
Lo! I talk wild and windy words, and fall
From my clear wits, and seem of mine own self
Dethroned, dispraised, dissented; and my mind,
That was my crown, breaks, and my heart is gone.
Alamanda.

THERE was not a finer croquet lawn in the neighbourhood than that at Leighton Place, nor one with which so much pains had been taken. In shape, a long oval, bordered with low box, which prevented the balls from rolling off the limits, and surrounded entirely with a broad gravel walk shaded by tall maples and evergreens, with rustic chairs and seats beneath, and here and there statues, and urns filled with luxuriant creepers and the shrubs which thrive best in the shade. At a little distance the musical waters of a fountain were heard, as they fell into the basin, where golden fish were playing, while patches of bright flowers dotting the turf heightened the general effect, and made it one of the most delightful of resorts. Edna had almost screamed for pleasure when, after breakfast was over, Roy took her there with his mother, who, though she never played, enjoyed nothing better than sitting in her favourite chair made of twisted roots, and listening to the click of the balls she could not see, and the merry shouts which followed a lucky hit.

"Suppose, Miss Overton, that you and Roy try a game while I rest," she said to Edna, while Roy rejoined:

"Yes, do; then I can judge of your skill, and know whether to choose you first this afternoon. Miss Sumerton and I are to be captains, I believe."

Edna had frequently played at croquet before; sometimes with Maude, sometimes with Ruth Gardner, and sometimes with Uncle Philip for an opponent, and except when playing against the latter was generally beaten. She took the mallet Roy brought to her, with some little hesitation, declaring her inability even to interest a skilful player, much less to beat one.

"Let me teach you then," Roy said. "You can learn a great deal in an hour."

To this Edna readily assented, and the game began with Roy as teacher. But Edna soon found that playing on the uneven, bumpy ground at Uncle Phil's, where the balls hid themselves in all sorts of holes and depressions, was a very different thing from playing on the closely-shaven lawn which had been rolled and pounded until it was nearly as smooth as a carpeted floor. She could play here, and was astonished at her own success, and struck so boldly and surely that Roy soon gave up the task of teaching her, and began to look after his own interests.

She was such a wee little creature and he so tall and big, that he almost felt as if playing with his daughter, though sure, never did a father watch the motions of his child with just the same feelings with which Roy watched Edna as she moved from point to point, now showing her dimpled hands and now poisoning her little boot upon her ball preparatory to croquetting him away.

She was very lithe, very graceful, and very modest withal, and she beat Roy twice out of five games, and when at last they were finished, and Roy led her to his mother, he said to her, laughingly:

"Remember, Miss Overton, you are engaged to me."

She knew what he meant, but the words and the extreme kindness and gentleness of his manner caused a sudden heart-throb of something like a thought of what happiness it might be to be really engaged to a man like Roy Leighton. She had not known him, personally, for twenty-four hours, and yet she had seen enough to understand how thoroughly good and noble he was; how different from Charlie, who, had he lived, could hardly have satisfied her now. But Charlie was dead, and she went from the croquet ground to his grave, with his mother, and laid a cluster of flowers upon the sod which covered him, and felt like a guilty hypocrite when Mrs. Churchill, who saw the act, pressed her hand warmly, and thanked her "for remembering my poor boy."

"I would like flowers put here every day," she said; "but my eyesight is so bad that I cannot see, while Roy's hands are not skilful in fashioning bouquets, and we have had no young lady staying here permanently until now."

"Charlie shall have flowers so long as they last," Edna replied with a trembling voice, while into her face there came a look of pain something like what it had worn on that dreadful night of the accident.

She had called him "Charlie," the old familiar name which carried her back to the Seminary days, when, aside from Aunt Letty, she had not known what sorrow was—and she was uncertain how Mrs. Churchill would take it. There was something very sad in the tone of her voice as she uttered the name, Charlie—pitiful Mrs. Churchill thought; and she deepened her grasp on Edna's hand and said, "Call him Charlie always when speaking of him to me. It makes it seem as if you had known him, and I can talk more freely to you than to a stranger. He was my pride, my poor boy; full of faults, but always loving and kind to his mother. Oh! Charlie, my darling. I wish I had him back. I wish he had not done so."

The tears were pouring over the poor mother's face, and Edna's kept company with them. She knew what the mother wished he had not done, and knew that but for her he would not have done it, and she felt for a few moments as if she were really guilty of Charlie's death; and could she then have restored him to his mother by taking up again her lonely life as it had been before she knew Charlie Churchill, she would willingly have done so. But there was no going back; and all she now could do was to comfort and love the helpless woman who clung to her so confidently and who seemed so much afraid of overtaking or wearying her out.

"You have always been in school, I hear," she said, when they went back to the house, and Edna had read aloud to her awhile. "Teaching must be accompanied with more excitement than sitting here and amusing me, so I shall not tax you much at first, lest you get tired of me. Go, now, and enjoy yourself where you like. Perhaps Roy will take you for a drive. I'll ask him; I hear his step now. Roy, come here, please."

And before Edna, who did not fancy being thus thrust upon Roy whether he would have her or not, could interfere, Mrs. Churchill had asked her son why he did not take Miss Overton for a drive, and he had expressed himself as delighted to do so. They were not gone long, for Roy had some matters to attend to before the dinner, served that day at two, as they were to have supper on the lawn after the croquet party was over; but during a *l'été-à-l'été* of an hour a young man and woman can learn a great deal of each other, and Roy's verdict with regard to Miss Overton, as he handed her out of his basket phaeton, was, "A very bright, fascinating girl, with something about her which interests me strangely;" while Edna would not allow herself to put in words what she thought of him. He was something as she had judged him to be from his letters, though better, kinder, gentler, she thought, and as many a person had done before her, she wondered that he had lived to the age of thirty without being married. She did not now believe implicitly in his eventually making Miss Burton his wife. She could not—they were so dissimilar; and she unconsciously found herself extracting comfort

from that fact, though she ascribed her motive wholly to the friendly interest she felt in Roy. He could not, from the very nature of things, be happy with Miss Burton, she thought; and as she dressed herself for dinner she warbled a part of an old love tune she had not sung since the days when Charlie Churchill used to stop by the seminary gate to listen to her singing, she knowing the while that he was listening and throwing more of sweetness and pathos into her voice.

"I am nothing but a kind of companion, and of course these grand people from Oakwood have a similar opinion of me. I saw it in that Miss Shane's eyes, and so it is not much matter how I dress. Still I want to look as well as I can," she said, as she stood before the glass arranging her hair and wondering what she should wear, which would look well on the lawn. "Maude says there is everything in one's looks when playing croquet," she continued, "and perhaps she is right. I'll wear my white piqué, with the little blue jacket."

She could not have chosen a more becoming costume, for the jacket was of that peculiar shade of blue which set off her fair complexion to the best advantage, and made her so pretty, that Mrs. Churchill, blind as she was remarked upon her dress when she came in to dinner.

"You remember your engagement to play with me, of course," he continued; and, when Edna suggested that she might be a detriment rather than a help to his side, he replied, "I want the best looking ones at any rate, so that I can boast of beauty if not skill. You and Miss Burton will go nicely together."

Edna did not relish her dinner quite as well after that speech, which showed that Roy claimed Miss Burton as something which by right belonged to him, and much as she despised herself for it, she knew that, inwardly, she had a feeling of relief when at last the party from Oakwood had arrived, and reported George as too ill to come with them. Roy said he was very sorry, and looked as if he meant it, and asked some questions about her as he led the way to the lawn where everything was ready. Maude, who was resplendent in white muslin, scarlet sash, and tall gaiters, seized at once upon Edna, and, drawing her aside, whispered to her of her happiness.

"He told me of his love for you, too, and I did not like him one bit the less. He couldn't help loving you of course, when he saw you so helpless and alone. He is a splendid fellow, isn't he? Nearly as good looking as Roy, and he is going to leave off smoking, and fit up my room all with blue, and we are to be married sometime next year if he is prosperous, and I won't have to teach the tiresome children any more. Oh, I am so happy. There he comes now. Hasn't he a good, kind face?"

And Maude beamed all over with delight as John came up and joined them, his eyes kindling, and growing very soft and tender, as Edna offered him her congratulations and told him how glad she was.

"I knew you would be," he said. "Knew Maude would suit you better than any one else, and Edna, please, remember that our home is yours also whenever you choose to make it so. Maude and I agreed upon that this morning."

They had reached the lawn by this time, and the ladies were handling the mallets daintily, and decrying their own skill, and saying the side which claimed them was sure to lose.

"Then I run no risk," Roy said, laughingly "and choose Miss Overton."

He had been drawing lots with Maude to see which would have the first choice, and the lot came to him.

"Miss Overton," he called again, and Edna rose from her seat by Mrs. Churchill's side, and came forward, noticing, as she did so, the glances of surprise and dissatisfaction exchanged between the town girls, who, though very civil to her, did not attempt to conceal that they knew her only as a companion, whose rightful place, was at Mrs. Churchill's side rather than in the ranks with themselves as Roy Leighton's first choice.

Maude wanted to choose John first, but modesty forbade, and then, too, he sometimes made awful hits, and had a way of pursuing a ball, no matter where it was or into what enemy's quarter it took him. John was out of the question, and so she chose Uncle Burton and Roy took John himself, and then two of the girls came next, and the London beau, and then the number was complete, and Miss Agatha, Shane and Beatrice Bradley retired in dignified silence, and taking seats by Mrs. Churchill, prepared to criticise the game. It was Roy's first turn, and he drove his ball through the third wicket and in the vicinity of the fourth, while Maude, who usually struck so surely, started badly, and only made her second arch.

Miss Agatha, who was reporting to Mrs. Churchill, and whose sympathies were on Maude's side, said a little sarcastically:

"She is in no danger from her opponent, I fancy; Miss Overton plays next."

Edna heard the remark, and while it sent the blood to her face, it seemed to lend steadiness to her hand and coolness to her judgment, and her first stroke was through both of the wickets, while a shout went up from Roy and Jack, and was echoed by Maude, who knowing that the town ladies looked upon Edna and herself as people belonging to the provincial class, rejoiced at her friend's success even though it should tell against her side. And it did tell sadly, for remembering Roy's teaching in the morning, Edna used her opponent's ball so skillfully as to reach the stake before stopping at all. But there she missed her stroke, and came back to her place by Roy, who commended her highly, while Miss Agatha began to change her tactics, and said "she was sure Miss Overton had played before that day."

Poor Mr. Burton was awkwardness itself. With the dread of talking to Roy before him he hardly saw his ball, and made a "booby" of himself at once, and said to Maude, as he knocked his unlucky ball back to its place: "I told you so. I can't play any more than an elephant."

But he was good at long shots, as Maude had said, and he did some long shooting before he was finished, for the game was a hotly-contested one. Maude recovered her skill with her second round, while Edna lost a little by being so constantly pursued by the city girl, who played the best, and who shared Miss Agatha's contempt for the plebeian. But Roy beat; fairly, honourably beat; and then they chose again, and Maude took Edna first, and Edna's side was always the winning one, until Miss Agatha suggested that "Miss Overton should play on both sides, and see what the result would be."

But Roy said Miss Overton was too tired to do that; he should not allow it. Besides it was nearly time for refreshments. The servants were arranging the tables now, and he suggested that, for a time, they should rest, and go wherever they pleased. That broke up the group, which divided in twos and threes, Maude walking away with John, Edna returning to Mrs. Churchill's side, and the town people making a little knot by themselves, under one of the tall trees.

Mr. Burton was thus left alone; seeing which, Roy asked him to go and look at a fast horse which he had recently purchased, and which was accounted by connoisseurs of horse-flesh a very fine animal. And so it came about that after the horse had been duly examined and admired, Roy found himself alone with Mr. Burton in a little rustic arbour, apart from all the rest of his guests, and where he could not well be seen, as the arbour was hidden from the greater part of the grounds by the evergreens which grew so thickly around it.

Now was Mr. Burton's opportunity. He had planned admirably to get Roy into this retired situation, and he gave himself considerable credit for his management. But how to begin was the difficulty, and he grew very red in the face, and felt so warm and uncomfortable that the perspiration began to show itself in little drops about his forehead and mouth. And still he could not think of a word to say, until he saw by Roy's manner that he was meditating a return to the house. Then, screwing up his courage to the highest pitch, and holding on to the seat with both his hands, as if what he was about to do required physical as well as mental effort, he made a beginning.

(To be continued.)

MR. CHARLES DICKENS'S WILL.

THE will of the late Charles Dickens, which is written in his favourite blue ink on a sheet of letter paper, has been proved in the Court of Probate by the executor, Mr. John Forster, and the executrix, Miss Georgina Hogarth, the sister-in-law of the deceased. It was executed May 12, 1869, and there is a codicil dated June 2, in the present year. The personality is sworn under 80,000l. He bequeaths 19 guineas to every servant, 1,000l. to Miss Ellen Lawless Fernan, 1,000l. to his daughter, Mary Dickens, besides an annuity of 300l. per annum so long as she is unmarried. If she marries the annuity ceases, but in that case she shares with the testator's other children in the provision made for them. He gives to Miss Georgina Hogarth, 8,000l., and adds:—

"I also give to the said Georgina Hogarth all my personal jewelry not hereinafter mentioned, and all the little familiar objects from my writing table and my room, and she will know what to do with those things. I also give to the said Georgina Hogarth all

my private papers whatsoever and whosoever, and I leave her my grateful blessing as the best and truest friend man ever had."

He gives to his eldest son, Charles, his library of printed books, his engravings and prints, the silver presented to him at Birmingham, the silver cup presented to him at Edinburgh, and his shirt-studs, shirt-pins and sleeve-buttons. He leaves 8,000*l.* in trust, the annual income thereupon to be paid to Mrs. Dickens during her lifetime, the trust fund after her decease to be divided among his children. To Mr. John Forster he leaves the gold repeater which was presented to him at Coventry, and such manuscripts of his published works as were in his possession at the time of his decease. He gives to his executor and executrix absolute power over his estate. After having copied the form of words which his legal advisers assured him were necessary, he proceeds:—"I solemnly enjoin my dear children always to remember how much they owe to the said Georgina Hogarth, and never to be wanting in a grateful and affectionate attachment to her, for they know well that she has been through all the stages of their growth and progress their ever useful, self-denying and devoted friend. And I desire here simply to record the fact that my wife, since our separation by consent, has been in the receipt from me of an annual income of six hundred pounds; while all the great charges of a numerous and expensive family have devolved wholly upon myself. I emphatically direct that I be buried in an inexpensive, unostentatious, and strictly private manner, that no public announcement be made of the time or place of my burial, that at the utmost not more than three plain mourning coaches be employed, and that those who attend my funeral wear no scarf, cloak, black bow, long hatband, or other such revolting absurdity. I direct that my name be inscribed in plain English letters on my tomb without the addition of 'Mr.' or 'Esquire.' I conjure my friends on no account to make me the subject of any monument, memorial, or testimonial whatever. I rest my claims to the remembrance of my country upon my published works, and to the remembrance of my friends upon their experience of me."

By a codicil he leaves his interest in *All the Year Round* to his son Charles.

FACETIÆ.

TABLES NOT MAHOAGANY.—A book, or pamphlet, is advertised under the name of 'Income Tax Tables. The uncalculating reader will perhaps misunderstand the nature of the tables so called. He may possibly imagine that Income Tax tables are the breakfast and dinner tables of the Great Exempt from the Income Tax, spread with luxuries which they enjoy at the expense of the classes amerced by it.—*Punch*.

THE EDUCATION PROBLEM.

Master Forster: "Please, m'm, I've done it, m'm!"
Schoolmistress (Britannia): "And how have you done it, William?"

Master Forster: "Please, m'm, I've reduced all the fractions to the lowest common denomination."
Schoolmistress: "Good boy! Go up!"
The good boy enters the cabinet.—*Punch*.

FRANCE IN A FRENZY.—What if Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, Catholic Hohenzollern were to become King of Spain? As a constitutional Sovereign, what power would he have, even had he the will, to help the Protestant King of Prussia to subjugate France? The French have the reputation of being dainty. Their Emperor has a taste; so, doubtless, has Ollivier, so has the Duc de Gramont, and they may have cause to be offended with the great Teutonic sausage, but must be over fastidious indeed to object so violently as they do to a "Small German."—*Punch*.

MORE REVENGE FOR FLODDEN.

Scene—A Scotch Hotel.

Tourist (indignant at his bill): "Why, landlord, there must be some mistake there!"

Landlord: "Mistake? Aye, aye. That stupid fellow, the waiter, has just charged you five shillings—too little."—*Punch*.

AN ILLIBERAL OLD GENTLEMAN.—"Educate the street boys—I beg your pardon, the street arabs—teach them reading, writing, and arithmetic! What then, sir?" demanded Mr. Scroggs. "Reading?—they will read the 'Police News' and the 'Lives of the Highwaymen. Writing?—they will write Gladstone on the shutters, and Bob Lowe on the walls, 'No Popery,' and other street Arabic. Arithmetic?—the street arabs will only do more addition sums on my gate-posts, besides drawing street arabesques, and scrawling 'Old Scroggs is a fool.'"—*Punch*.

THE FORCE OF RIDICULE.—We are smitten with remorse! We never thought when we called on the authorities to visit the shortcomings of the Metropolitan Police with well-merited punishment

they would take such a very severe step as they have done in inflicting the new helmet on the force. The suffering the poor fellows will undergo in the form of chaff directed by our street "Youth at the helm" will be something terrible to contemplate, for it is easy for everyone—except the policeman—to take it off. We trust on mature reflection it will be seen that the infliction of this head-gear will only aggravate the evil it is intended to remedy. People have hitherto complained that "a policeman is never to be seen when he is wanted," but now they will understand and sympathise with his reasons for keeping out of sight.—*Fun*.

THE ADVANTAGE OF IT.

"How are you, Smith?" says Jones.
Smith pretends not to know him, and replies, hesitatingly:

"Sir, you have the advantage of me."
"Yes," retorts Jones. "I s'pose so; everybody has that's got common sense."

RAINFALL AND SEASON.—A French chemist arguing from the fact that great battles have coincided with heavy showers, has proposed that, in order to terminate a drought, the attempt should be made to shake rain out of the clouds by a general cannonade. This, with the view apparently, of getting the popular mind of France to entertain the idea of it, he suggests, might be associated with some religious celebration. We should like to know what FARADAY would have said to this twofold proposal, which, if it were practised, and found to answer, would rather mislead the faithful but unscientific multitude? A French philosopher might not mind doing that, but a true English one would. We would dissociate the theological from the scientific experiment for the detection of rain. Invoke St. Swithin on St. Swithin's day if you like, but try your cannonade on some day before or after.—*Punch*.

AFTER THE RAIN.

THOUGH the sky be gray with tempest,
And the floods pour over the plain,
Yet the beauty of earth will quicken
In the sunshine after the rain.

So the sorrow that shrouds the spirit
In a transient cloud of pain,
Makes the after-joy more precious,
Like sunshine after the rain.

So the lover's budding passion
Is fed by his rival's pain,
And love out of hatred springeth
Like sunshine after the rain.

For, ever to work by contrasts
The Giver of Life is fain,
And the brightness of Virtue is only
By the blackness of Vice made plain.

This is a lesson that Nature
Is teaching, too oft in vain,
To the stubborn hearts of mortals,
Through the Sunshine and the Rain.

C. D. G.

GEMS.

THE envious man grows base by contemplating the success of another.

THE tears of affection are dew-drops from the blue sky of the soul.

HE who masters his passion subdues a fearful enemy.

NOBODY takes a reproof so kindly as he that deserves most to be commended.

WE are never happy; we can only remember that we were so once.

THERE is hardly any circumstance so bad that it may not be made worse by mismanagement.

WE must love our friends as true amateurs love paintings; they have their eyes perpetually fixed on the fine parts, and see no others.

NEVER overpraise any absent person, especially ladies in the company of ladies. It is the way to bring envy and hatred upon those whom you wish well to.

STATISTICS.

COAL EXPORTS.—Return of the quantity of coal exported from Grimsby during June, 1870:—To Belgium, 926 tons; to Denmark, 611 tons; to France, 6,386 tons; to Holland, 658 tons; to the Hanseatic Towns, 638 tons; to Italy, 629 tons; to Malta, 554 tons; to Mecklenburg, 262 tons; to Norway, 466 tons; to Prussia, 5,651 tons; to Russia, 10,476 tons; to Sweden, 2,204 tons; to Spain, 611 tons—total to foreign ports, 29,072 tons; corresponding period 1869, 24,274 tons. Coastwise, 3,003 tons; corresponding period 1869, 2,246 tons. Total 1870, 32,075 tons; corresponding period 1869, 26,520 tons. Increase in 1870, 5,555 tons. In the return for May, previously published, "decrease" should have been "increase."

SHIP BUILDING.—A return prepared by the Board of Trade shows the number and tonnage of vessels above 50 tons built at the several ports of the United Kingdom in the last three years. The tonnage of such vessels built at Glasgow was 52,865 tons in 1867, 76,390 in 1868, 76,312 in 1869; at Sunderland 47,625, 64,374, and 65,905 tons in the three years respectively; at Liverpool 12,475, 30,257, and 41,577 tons respectively; at Newcastle 15,464, 19,031, and 25, 743 tons; at Port Glasgow 11,709, 14,022, and 17,003 tons; at Greenock 8,532, 16,819, and 14,487 tons; at Stockton 3,674, 4,762, and 12,287 tons; at Aberdeen 9,199, 7,924, and 9,691 tons; at Hull 7,266, 8,186, and 8,498 tons; at Dundee 4,757, 6,220, and 7,055 tons; at Belfast 6,071, 2,093, and 5,41 tons; at Middlesbrough 818, 1,743, and 4,799 tons; at London 3,644, 6,607, and 3,872 tons; at Hartlepool 2,515, 2,374, and 3,817, and at West Hartlepool 2,611, 1,458, and 2,787 tons; at Shields 2,094, 2,626, and 2,880 tons, and at South Shields 1,452, 2,099, and 1,682 tons; at Banff 2,475, 2,630, and 2,198 tons; at Waterford 1,364, 805, and 2,178 tons; at Perth 2,305, 1,733, and 2,137 tons. The other returns are below 2,000 tons in 1869.

PUBLIC REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE.—The total receipts into the Exchequer from April 1 to June 18 were 23,802, 999*l.*, against 21,749,460*l.* for the corresponding period of last year, showing an increase of 2,053,539*l.* The expenditure during the same period was 13,934,837*l.*, against 15,992,643*l.*, or a decrease of 2,057,806*l.* The balances at the Bank of England were on the 18th of June of this year 8,744,976*l.*, and in the Bank of Ireland 1,123,186*l.*, making together a total of 9,868,162*l.*, against 5,756,817*l.* on the same day last year.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE Commissioners at Scotland-yard have issued sets of boxing-gloves to the police at the various station-houses in the metropolis.

LEAD POISONING.—Milk administered daily has lately been found of avail in preventing the workers at lead factories from suffering from the effects of that metal.

THE monument to King Robert the Bruce, designed by George Cruikshank, which is to be erected at Edinburgh, will represent the king in chain armour, standing on a rock pedestal. The statue will be in bronze, 10 feet in height; the pedestal gray granite, 12 feet high.

THE hop plantations in Herefordshire never looked better, it is said, than they do this season. The bine is well grown and strong; there is an utter absence of fly or blight, and the lateral shoots have turned out well, and the burr, where formed, is strong in appearance.

MACLISE's cartoon for the picture representing "The interview of Wellington and Blucher after Waterloo," which is a magnificent work of art, was lately purchased by the Royal Academy, where a space of wall exists which is perfectly suitable for its display.

It is stated, by way of comparing the outlay by France and England in the purchase of pictures during the last year, that the former country expended on the twenty-four sections of the Louvre not more than 100,000 francs, while the latter, for the National Gallery alone, laid out 209,725 francs. It is also noted that in England the prices of the several acquisitions are stated; not so in France.

FROM Naples we learn that five instruments of music, in a perfect state of preservation, and bearing a great resemblance to the modern flute, have just been discovered at Pompeii. The materials are silver and ivory.

AN Englishman, writing from Mexico, states that bands of robbers are more numerous than ever. It is not an unusual thing, he says, to see a diligence arrive with all the windows closed, which means that the robbers have not left the passengers enough clothes to enable them to appear decently before the public. On such occasions blankets are stuffed in at the windows, in order that they may walk from the diligence to their bedrooms in a becoming manner.

CASUALTIES ON THE COAST IN 1869.—The Board of Trade return arranges in four classes the wrecks and casualties on the coasts of the United Kingdom occasioning loss of life in 1869. Eighty-one vessels, tonnage 11,881 tons, and crews 553 in number, foundered; 50 of the vessels were laden, 22 in ballast, 9 unknown; 79 were total losses, 2 were cases of partial damage; 435 lives were lost; official inquiries were held in 3 cases. The next class consists of strandings, and includes 69 vessels, of 14,913 tons, and also with 553 men; 45 of these vessels were laden, 19 in ballast, 5 unknown; 64 were total losses, 5 partial damage; 288 lives were lost; in one case an official inquiry was held. Next came collisions. This list shows 25 vessels, of 4,696 tons, with 215 men.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

SNOWDRIFT.—Declined, with thanks.

M. E. S.—The colour is a very pretty light brown.

VIOLET and MABEL.—The handwriting is extremely good.

CLAUDE.—1. Such a transaction is not a marriage. 2. The writing is very good.

J. W. R.—Glycerine and rose-water, rubbed over the hands when the day's work is ended, will be beneficial.

J. C.—Withernam was the name of a locality well known in those days. To your other query—yes, if they are accepted.

PHILO.—The total earnings of the boys connected with the various shoeblack brigades now amount to nearly 7,000*l.* a year. The first brigade was founded about twenty years ago.

CAM.—The bridge over the Niagara which connects the railways of Canada and New York has been opened for the last fifteen years. It is a suspension bridge of a single span. The width of the span is 800 feet.

ANXIOUS (Portsmouth).—You are liable, and should pay. The police cannot be taken until he obtains judgment, and before that is recorded against you, you will be served with a summons.

LOCILLER.—The turtle-dove is not a native of England. The bird's native land is Africa; it only visits our country in the summer months, and returns to its own in the winter.

CHARLOTTE.—Upon the marriage of a widow, it is usual to dispense with the bridesmaids. Some friends of the lady should, however, accompany her to church; and her nearest living relation should give her away.

MRS. MADDOCK.—We are unable to afford you any help in your difficult task, which is akin to looking for a needle dropped amongst a load of hay. Probably he will make his appearance some day when you are not expecting to see him.

MARGARET.—1. When the crier says, "Oh, yes," he means "Listen to me." "Oh, yes," is a corruption of the old French term *Oyez*, which signifies "hear ye." 2. Mark is the name of an old silver coin, the value of which was 13*s.* 4*d.*

ENQUIRY LUT.—The battalion will not return to the identical place for a year or two. The bandmen often live out of barracks, and do not necessarily follow the battalion. They might stay with that portion of the regiment which remains in town.

T. H.—The lines are not without merit. The dominant idea, however, is fantastic. Such a quality is sometimes permissible, no doubt; but then the subject should be one that is entirely beyond actual experience. When realities are touched, the common sense of mankind should not be shocked.

F. PROCTOR.—Letters are now transmitted to New Zealand via Saint Francisco three times each month. You can learn the precise time by enquiring at any Post-office. We should probably mislead you if we printed the dates for the current month, since they may be changed by the time this falls under your notice.

CLARA.—It is a matter of great doubt whether the apocryphal question will be of any service to you. We do not recommend it. Just keep the hair neatly trimmed and dressed, and trust the rest to nature. Your system may have been debilitated by the heat of the summer, and may require a tonic, such as quinine.

JAMES HARDIE.—Amber is acted upon by heat. If heated to 448 degrees Fahrenheit it melts. Alcohol has some influence upon amber, it will absorb from it a soft yellow resin, but it will leave behind a fat, unctuous matter called bitumen. Sulphuric acid has a more powerful action; and nitric acid will convert amber into a resinous substance, dissolving the amber entirely.

A CONSTANT READER.—It is the Academy of Sciences in Paris of which you are in search. But that is an institution where scientific discoveries are discussed merely, not a place where relief is afforded to sufferers from any physical defect. We recommend you to apply again to the institution in London, and to persevere in your attendance there.

JAMES T.—When the moon is eclipsed it is owing to the opaque body of the earth preventing the rays of the sun from reaching the moon. So also when the sun is eclipsed, it is the opaque body of the moon which hides the sun, or a portion of it from the earth. In the former case, the earth is passing between the moon and the sun; in the latter, the moon is passing between the sun and the earth. A solar eclipse takes place when the moon is new; a lunar, when she is full.

SEVER.—Dandruff, or head-scurf, sometimes makes its appearance from want of cleanliness. It is, however, often a sign of disordered health. The only local treatment necessary is frequent washing and the application of some simple ointment. The great thing is to regain the lost health. The commencement of baldness is generally accompanied by dandruff.

ROSE and SHAMROCK.—Sufficient time has not yet elapsed for a letter to reach you. A sailing vessel takes at least 80 days, and sometimes four months to get to Victoria. Then, if he wrote immediately, a letter would take about two months to travel home. The colour of the hair is very dark brown. It appears to grow in luxuriance and to require neither oil nor anything of that kind.

A. Z.—You must not expect all the days to be sunny. A cloud will come now and then. There is nothing in your description inconsistent with his old true love. Shorn of its vivacity by the force of age and care, love often appears to be no more than a sincere friendship; but his actions betray a deeper feeling than friendship know. You should still trust him, for we think you may be sure that he is true.

W. W. R. (Rochdale).—1. The claim appears to be just. In all probability, if you were summoned the judge would order you to pay. 2. To clean marble: reduce to a fine powder, some soda and some pumice stone, and add some finely powdered chalk. Mix these ingredients together, and apply them with a damp cloth. 3. Pot moulds are made of copper or iron, and are manufactured by artificers in those metals in accordance with the precise purpose for which the moulds are required.

V.—The stature of mankind varies from 4*ft.* to 6*ft.* The examples that exist of an excess of six feet are few. The Hottentots are below the average stature; it is said that the usual height of their women is about four feet. The Patagonians, on the other hand, are celebrated for their great height. The best accounts state that they commonly attain six feet, and not unfrequently exceed it. In physical strength and powers of endurance the English surpass most if not all other nations.

A CONSTANT READER.—The following is a recipe for copying ink: Aleppo galls, bruised, 4*oz.*; sulphate of iron, 4*oz.*; gum arabic, 8*oz.*; corrosive sublimate, 6 grains; croscote, 10 drops to each pint of water; water, 6 pints. Boil the galls in the water, then add the other ingredients, and keep the whole in a well-stopped bottle, occasionally shaking it. After two months have elapsed, strain and pour off into smaller bottles, which should be well corked. We are at a loss to understand what you mean by "finished ink."

AYRI—A SONNET.

Thrice welcome hour that ends the weary night
Of love in absence. Hush, my throbbing heart!
I hear her step! She comes! Who now can part
The happy twain whom soul and sense unite?
Oh, can it be? Is this no mocking dream?
Nay, by these clasping hands—this fervent kiss—
(Nectar of Hybla!)—and by this, and this,
I know these for my own. Ah! now I deem
The gods grow envious of an earthly bliss
That dims Elysian raptures; and I seem
More blest than blest Endymion; for he
Saw not his love; while I, with dotting eyes—
Oh, joy ineffable! do gaze on these
Whose circling arms enclose my Paradise!

J. E. G. S.

AMATEUR.—"The Honey-moon" is a drama, which was produced some sixty-five years ago, shortly after its author's death. Though at one time it met with great success, it has not often been performed of late. The author, John Tobin, died at the early age of thirty-four, and deserves to be remembered for his perseverance. For fifteen years he persevered in offering to the theatres play after play, each of which was uniformly rejected by the managers. "The Honey-moon" was not produced until about two months after Tobin's death, and on account of its success, the author's rejected pieces were eventually brought upon the stage.

MARIE.—It is too early for you to marry. You are quite right in looking forward to being united to a young man for whom you have so great a regard. But you must see your way. It is certainly not necessary that the path before you should be easy, but it is important that you should have a notion as to how the "ways and means" are to be procured. Judging from your statements, there seems very little hope of the young gentleman being in a position to earn money for some two or three years. The circumstances unite with the ages, and counsel you both to wait. The handwriting is very neat and legible.

S. N. J.—The division of labour is not only of advantage as far as rapidity of execution is concerned, but also because of the economy of production. The saying you quote is founded in fact. It is virtually true that it takes ten persons to make a pin. This is so, not merely to ensure expedition, but also because the capacity required is so various. The wages of the ten individuals vary from fivepence to seven shillings a day, and it is evident that a workman receiving the maximum amount of wages would be unprofitably employed if he were set to perform any portion of the work which could be equally as well done by a person who could only earn a lower wage.

BETA.—To make tobacco-pipes you must procure some of the Dorsetshire clay, which is commonly used for this purpose. The clay must be worked into a thin paste when all foreign matters must be separated from it. The water is next evaporated by heat, until the clay becomes of a thickish consistence, when it must be well kneaded. You must then work it into long thin strips, and roll them out to about the length of a pipe, with a projecting bulb at one end to form the bowl. This roll of clay is next bored by means of an iron needle previously oiled, inserted at the small end of the roll. The bulb is then bent into the proper position to form the bowl, and the piece of clay with the needle remaining in it, is placed into an iron mould made for the purpose, to complete its form. It is taken out of the mould to have the bowl hollowed, and after sundry other manipulations, is sent to the kiln to be baked. An ordinary kiln, with one turn, will bake about 7,000 pipes in nine hours.

T. P.—It does not appear to us that the landlord was at fault; if this be so we do not see what grounds you have for an action. The loss seems to have been occasioned by your own neglect, and by your refusal to comply with the words of the statute. It entails that no innkeeper shall be liable to make good to any guest of such innkeeper any loss of or injury to goods or property brought to his inn, not being a horse or other live animal, or any carriage, to a greater amount than 30*l.* except the property shall have been stolen or lost through the wilful act of the innkeeper or any of his servants; or unless such property shall have been deposited expressly for safe custody with such innkeeper, who is bound to receive it.

THREE SOLDIERS' DAUGHTERS.—"Mary," nineteen, tall, dark hair and eyes, affectionate, fond of home, and the daughter of a sergeant-major. "Maggie," fair, dark hair and eyes, fond of dancing and home, and the daughter of a sergeant. "Charlotte," fair, dark hair, hazel eyes, plays on the piano, and sings, fond of home and dancing, and a barrack master's daughter. Respondents should be non-commissioned officers in a cavalry regiment.

H. G. J., twenty-one, 5*ft.* 6*in.*, fair complexion, dark eyes, can sing a good song, and is a sailor. Respondent must be good looking, and loving; a Hastings girl preferred.

BURBAY HARRY, medium height, fair complexion, brown hair, hazel eyes, in the navy, and expects promotion soon. Respondent must be tall, a brunette, pretty, able to sing and dance, and play on the piano.

FORGET-ME-NOT, fair, tall, dark eyes, and good looking. Respondent must be tall, dark, between three or four and twenty, and respectfully connected; a tradesman preferred.

VIOLET, nineteen, medium height, blue eyes, light brown hair, and in a good position. Respondent must be about twenty-two, tall, good looking, and in a good position.

A. G., medium height, fair, with whiskers, good prospects, and of good family. Respondent must be handsome, affectionate, accomplished, and vivacious.

J. C., twenty-six, 5*ft.* 5*in.*, loving, dark brown hair, hazel eyes, stout, fond of home, and in a good position. Respondent must be stout, about twenty-six, and a Roman Catholic; a dressmaker preferred.

JOHN A. J., medium height, black hair and whiskers, fond of home, affectionate, and in the Navy. Respondent must be about twenty-one, and capable of making a good wife.

CLARA DE CLARE, under twenty, tall, fair, handsome, loving, cheerful, and domesticated.

W. A. S., twenty-two, 5*ft.* 9*in.*, fair, good tempered, and with 700*l.* a year. Wishes to become acquainted with a young lady with a view to matrimony.

LITTLE HUXLEY, twenty, dark, fond of home and music, and in the Navy. Respondent must be pretty, not over twenty-one, and able to wash a shirt and cook a dinner.

P. E. S., twenty-six, 5*ft.* 5*in.*, dark, and a tradesman. Respondent must be fair and affectionate.

VIOLET, nineteen, tall, black hair, blue eyes, accomplished, domesticated, and with an income of 500*l.* per annum. Respondent must be tall, cheerful, fond of home, and about twenty-three.

MABEL, eighteen, tall, light complexion, amiable, and will have 1,000*l.* when of age. Respondent must be tall, good looking, about twenty, and have a good income.

JOHN THE SECOND, nineteen, fair, good looking, in good circumstances, a great admirer of music, and plays well. Respondent must be about eighteen, good looking, and fond of music.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

J. P. is responded to by—"P. C." twenty-six, short, fair, and son of children—"Behuda," tall, dark, nice looking, fond of home, domesticated, and a widow with two boys; and—"Jenny B." twenty-two, dark, cheerful, and able to make a home happy.

ALFRED by—"Tib," pretty, loving, cheerful, fond of music and home.

BOB THE BOWMAN by—"Margery," twenty, tall, handsome, splendid dark eyes, and fond of music and dancing.

W. H. by—"Hilda," Auburn hair, dark eyes, loving, highly accomplished, domesticated, income 300*l.*, and would like to change *carie de vie*.

BLUEBELL by—"C. T. L." twenty-nine, 5*ft.* 7*in.*, good looking, light hair and eyes, cheerful, remarkably attached to home and its pleasures, and in a respectable position.

C. J. M. by—"Jenny," twenty, fair complexion, dark hazel eyes, light hair, lively, and would make a good little wife; would like *carie*.

VERGIL by—"Fair Rosamond," under twenty, tall, fair, dark hair and eyes, cheerful, loving, constant, and domesticated.

A FARMER'S SON by—"Louisa," nineteen, fair, fond of music, with an income, and a farmer's daughter.

LILY by—"Trueheart," well connected, in easy circumstances, and with a comfortable home of his own.

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